

Shirley (the organization uses first names only) knows what she is talking about. She used to be an uncontrolled drinker, but hasn't touched alcohol in 24 years.

"If (a person) has been sober just a short time, they can get in trouble again (around holidays)," said Shirley. "It's such a drinking society."

"People can get down into the pits with crying," she added. "For other people, it will elevate their mood."

Shirley said there are some 300 AA groups in eastern Michigan and southwestern Ontario. Through the AA program, alcoholics admit they are "powerless" over alcohol.

The goal of AA members is to remain sober one day at a time, to make amends for persons whom their alcoholism has harmed and to build self-respect. Phone 541-6565.

"AA doesn't keep anybody sober," said Shirley. "We give the tools."

Family members of alcoholics can obtain help through separate organizations call Al-Anon and Alateen. For information on, call 527-4610 in Wayne County, and 647-0021 in Oakland County.

OVEREATERS Anonymous helps persons for whom eating has become a compulsion.

Members of this self-help organization follow the Alcoholics Anonymous philoso-

phy. Its members meet to gain control of their eating, to build a more positive self-image and, eventually, to lose weight.

"By the time you get to Overeaters Anonymous it's a last attempt," said "Sandy," a wife of 18 years and mother of three teens.

Many of its members have gone the route from eating continuously and tucking away food "just in case," to diets of every kind and having their jaws wired shut, said Sandy.

"I had tried and failed on diets," said Sandy, who has been associated with Overeaters Anonymous for more than two years. She currently does volunteer work on the organization's hotline.

"By following the tools they give you, and the program, I was able to lose my weight (60 pounds)," said Sandy. "I like myself more, and the kids sense that."


For information about Overeaters Anonymous meetings, call 545-5433.

If some troubled persons become overeaters or problem drinkers, others take out their emotional problems by abusing family members.

FIRST STEP is a counseling service in western Wayne County for victims of spouse abuse.

Counselors are on duty from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Available are group rap sessions and individual counseling.

For information, call 425-8000.

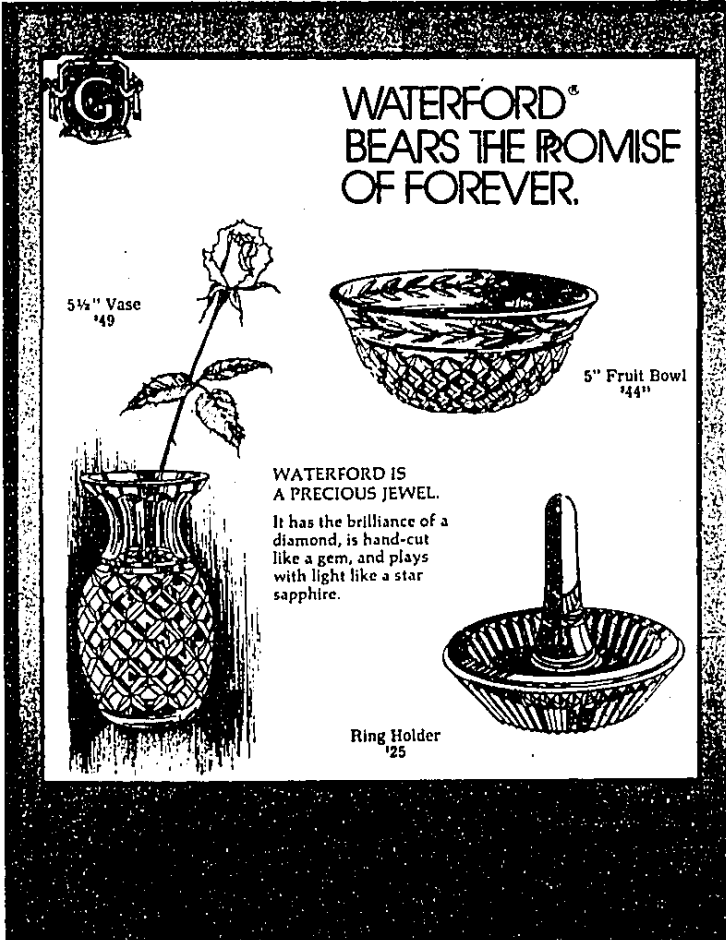


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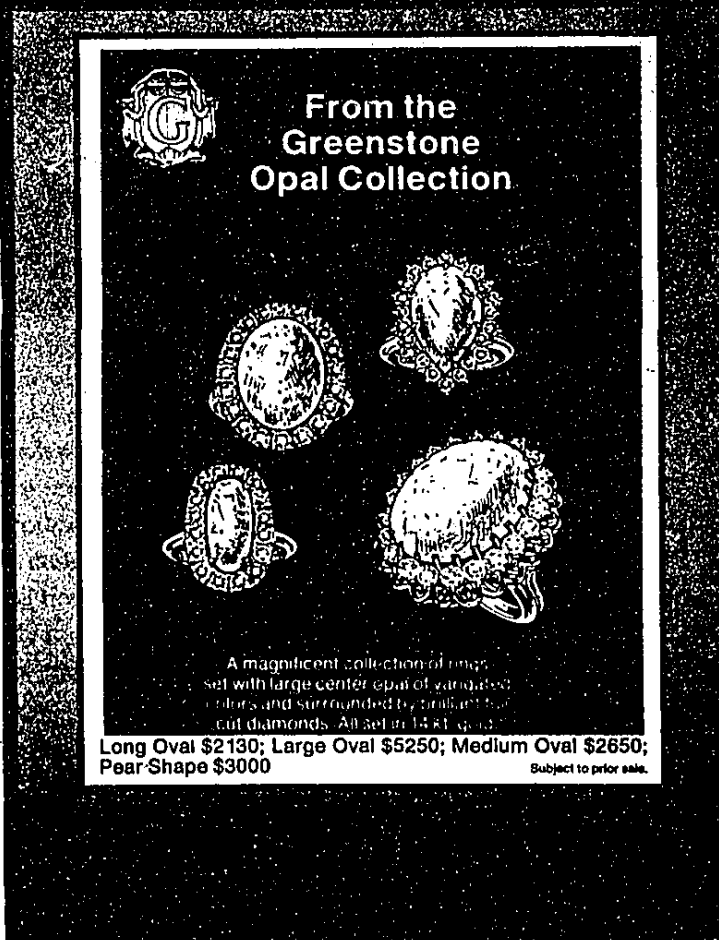
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