

# Let alcohol messages be target

IF YOU'RE A parent of a son or daughter under 21, there's a newly falsed opportunity to help you help them deal with drinking.

U.S. Surgeon General Antonio Novello will soon meet with the major beer and wine companies to ask them to voluntarily stop advertising campaigns targeted at young people.

"In order to win this war, we have to stop giving mixed messages," Novello says.

This is happening at the same time that Rep. Joseph Kennedy II, D-Mass., is trying to get his bill to require health hazard warnings at the end of alcoholic beverage commercials and on printed advertisements through Congress.

He, very obviously, knows how substance abuse problems can devastate families.

People active against drugs and alcohol abuse in our communities are saying it's about time. The results of the lure of alcohol advertising is what they've been fighting daily (not just nightly) at the grassroots level.

LAST SPRING the 48th District Court Task Force on Alcohol and



**Judith Doner Berne**

Substance Abuse, serving Birmingham and the Bloomfields, brought in Penny Norton, who explained to a small audience just how beer, wine and liquor advertisers appeal to young people and to minorities.

A similar message will be delivered Nov. 21 at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus by Jean Kilbourne who will examine the images associated with alcohol in advertising — how advertising falsely links alcohol with happiness, wealth and success, when in truth that's what the abuse of alcohol can diminish and destroy.

Norton wrote off the ability of Congress to pass legislation such as Joseph Kennedy II is proposing because of the powerful beer and wine lobbies.

But maybe she hadn't counted on the surgeon general's end run — to

get their voluntary compliance to keep their hands off young people.

Still, Novello has her hands full. Statistics show that adult drinking is down while underage drinking hasn't budged.

Just ask Groves High School Student Congress co-presidents Mary Ranck and Mark Ellison as reported in the newsletter put out by Birmingham-Bloomfield Families in Action.

Ranck says matter of factly that there's always some drinking at high school football games, the article reports. But she noticed it was getting worse. "At our first game this season, people were pushing each other, some were falling over — they were being obnoxious and their behavior was very obvious. And you could smell it all over there."

"IT WAS EMBARRASSING to the school and to me as a student leader. And I knew others felt as I did."

So, armed with a petition signed by other students, they went to Groves administrators. As a result, there is now a Breathalyzer available for use at all school functions.

Beer and wine industry lobbyists say their statistics show ads move consumers from one product to another but don't induce more people to drink. And they point out that some companies are urging moderation in their slogans.

The statistics go out the window if you attend a teen party, any teen party. Young people don't distinguish between which beer or wine cooler they're guzzling. If it's the beer at hand, you don't see them refusing it because they prefer Budweiser. And the theme of moderation, while still playing to the underage drinker, reinforces that mixed message to which Novello refers.

Drinking requires maturity and a physical tolerance which many adults can't claim. Most of us have seen drunkenness spoil an evening. Many have seen alcoholism spoil a life.

Targeting young people before they have their chance at maturity is abuse. Novello and your U.S. senators and representatives need to hear your outrage.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

# A haunting trend sweeps in holiday

THINKING BACK on a really spooky Halloween...

You know those "haunted houses" that crop up about the middle of October? Some are sponsored by local Jaycees, chambers of commerce or other civic groups. They're the ones that charge admission to scare the bejabbers out of you.

Well this year (actually, for the last two or three years) some other groups have added a new twist to this approach to freaky fun. I don't know of any cases in this immediate area, but consider this scenario from a "haunted house" in Tampa, Fla.:

A sign at the door says children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult, but an unaccompanied 8-year-old is admitted without question.

In one room the watches as a serial killer picks over body parts in a refrigerator. He then begins to eat the insides of a body lying on a bed.

In another room the head of a man lying on a bed spits as a demon jumps out into the crowd. The demon leads the crowd into the next room and proceeds to flog a bleeding man nailed to a cross.

In another room a woman screams while a doctor and nurse perform an abortion on her. They then thrust a dead fetus in her face and scream, "You said you wanted to get rid of the little nuisance, didn't you?"

SOUNDS LIKE a bit of overkill (no pun intended) and it was. The 8-year-old went home, shaking and terrified.

The reason her parents sent her off alone to something billed as a "Real Haunted House" was simple. The exhibition was sponsored and staged by a church — a sect known as Potter's House — and her parents figured she would see ghosts and goblins but not the kind of macabre scenes that she encountered.

And, oh yes, when visitors entered the last room of the "Real Haunted House," they were greeted by the pastor, who told them that everything they had just seen happens in real life and then encouraged them to accept Jesus Christ as a way of combating "demonic forces." They were also given information about the church and encouraged to sign up for the mailing list.

Such church-sponsored gore parlors have been cropping up from Massachusetts to California, from Florida to Oregon. They are billed as



**Jack Gladden**

"haunted houses," but once inside a visitor is treated to graphic displays of mutilation and religious propaganda about the "evils" of drugs, alcohol, rock music, pornography and abortion. Abortion is the most common theme.

IN ONE SUCH house in Dennis, Mass., an actress in a bloody nightgown writhes on a table screaming, "I want my baby!" An actor, dressed as a doctor, hands her a handful of simulated blood and tissue, shouting, "Here's your baby!" The woman ends up in hell.

Out in Newberg, Ore., in a haunted house operated by the New Life Fellowship church, visitors first saw a video in which shadowy figures told how sex, drugs and pop music sent them to hell. Another scene showed a drug dealer being stabbed.

And in one room a young woman was depicted lying on a gurney covered with a bloody sheet after having had an abortion. According to a couple of visitors:

"There were two nurses with bloody tools telling her, 'This is what happens to bad girls when they go out and have sex.' They were telling her she was a murderer and a sinner. Then, there was a doctor who was showing a handful of stuff that was supposed to be her baby. There was a guy in a hood telling us that's what happens when girls have sex before marriage."

And so it went... in similar "haunted houses" across the country as religious extremists found a new way to force their particular views on unsuspecting visitors.

What does it all mean? I asked the Architecture Major that question. He's not much of a philosopher, but this time he may have come up with the obvious answer.

"They're trying to take us back to the Middle Ages," he said. "And it looks like we're getting there."

Jack Gladden is a copy editor for Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

# Programs shore up learning skills

GUESS WHO: His first name is John. His last name begins with "T." He's an ex-athlete. In education for more than 30 years, he coached track champions, taught English and saw former students build prominent careers. No, I'm not talking about myself, but I'm talking about a man who has all of that in common with me and more.

When John Tenbusch called the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers to ask me to do a column on his Canton Township education center, hearing his voice again recalled zesty memories of a fierce coaching rivalry. His elite University of Detroit Jesuit High School trackmen competed with my inner-city Detroit public school kids for several championships.

He's been teaching at UD High since 1957, but now he's also helping students of all ages who have an entirely different background. At his Wehrli Performance Training Center, one of 14 such outlets in Michigan, he teaches students who have life and learning problems that short-circuited their progress in public education.

Developed by ex-Waterford teacher Kitty Wehrli, this self-contained, reading-based, learning-how-to-learn program is aptly entitled "Learning for Everyone." Consisting of three uniquely designed, one hour sessions per week, it balances carefully paced tape instruction, reading time and teacher time.

IN OPERATION since February, Tenbusch's center has already amassed impressive supportive statistics. "I learned from my many successful years at U. of D. High that everyone can succeed, given enough attention from an encouraging instructor," he said.

"A vital part of this program — and any such program — is that the teacher show students he's confident they'll improve."

Now right he is — and considering his teaching and coaching achievements (his teams won nine city titles) — I have to speculate whether his center is successful because of its processes alone or because it also has him.

A teacher's demonstrated confidence in a student is often called the



**John Telford**

"self-fulfilling prophecy." This phenomenon really works.

Many years ago my own superb college coach, David L. Holmes, had me believing in myself to the unlikely extent that I was consistently outperforming him at national and international levels whom I had no business being on the same track with in terms of brute ability, power and speed.

Years later I was to similarly premise my soon to be state championships that they were going to win. I confess that secretly I wasn't always so sure. But the key was that they believed that I believed it, and therefore they believed in themselves.

I'M SURE that many if not most public school teachers valiantly try

to practice such prophesizing as well. Still as a teacher and administrator who spent more than three decades in local public K-12 education, I'm proud to note that students like those at Tenbusch's center failed in public school but are succeeding with him.

Realistically, public education can use all the extra help it can get — whatever the source. It would be great if we could induce our government to reallocate enough money to purchase supplemental programs like Wehrli's and Tenbusch's for every needy student, as well as to shore up the entire K-12 spectrum. Then ultimately there would be no need for remedial programs.

However, don't hold your breath for it to happen.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, most recently was assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth-Canton district.

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