

MCCULLOCH

FROM PAGE C4

tolerance for the chemical ethanol increases and markedly more amounts of the substance are needed to achieve the effects of previously smaller amounts. The old myth of "I can drink everyone else under the table, therefore I don't have a problem with drinking" is in reality a sign of increased physical tolerance for alcohol and a dangerous sign of a growing dependence.

As addiction progresses, symptoms of withdrawal may be seen when the substance is not used or not available. Sometimes a closely related substance (a tranquilizer for example or marijuana or other drugs of abuse) is taken to relieve withdrawal symptoms. Diagnostic signs of an alcohol withdrawal process are seen in the presence of hand tremors, insomnia, rapid pulse rate, nausea or vomiting, anxiety, and, in the extreme cases (about 5%), alcoholic withdrawal hallucinations and even grand mal seizures.

By this time in the drinking pattern, there is a persistent desire with unsuccessful attempts to cut down or control drinking. A great deal of time is spent in activities related to drinking. Important social or occupational activities are given up because of the substance use. The drinker continues in a compulsive way to consume alcohol despite knowledge of having recurrent physical or psychological problems that have been caused or are worsened by more drinking.

THE CAGE TEST

Questions that can be asked to see where a drinker is on the continuum of use, abuse or addiction include the following:

- Are attempts being made at cutting down?
- Is the drinker annoyed by what people say about their drinking?
- Are guilty feelings occurring about drinking?
- Does the drinking now include eye openers (morning drinks to decrease the shakes after a night of heavy drinking)?

A YES answer to any of these can be indicative of a serious

drinking problem.

Alcohol has been around for a long time and it wasn't until 1950 that the World Health Organization classified alcoholism as a disease. Some of the effects of later stage alcoholism include severe memory impairment (Korsakov Syndrome - brain damage secondary to drinking that has caused severe vitamin deficiency), liver cirrhosis, and a generalized atrophy (cell death) throughout the brain, measurable upon autopsy.

Another unusual characteristic of alcoholism is that its chief symptom often is denial. It has been described as the only disease that convinces you that it's not a problem. Some research has shown that from the time a medical concern has been given about one's drinking until one really gets desired help with the problem takes 9 years in men and 7 years in females on average. Who would ever let such time elapse to tend to a diagnosed cancer or diabetes?

TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE

More than ever before, therapeutic help is available for those with alcohol abuse or alcohol addiction problems. Many mental health professionals now have specific and advanced certified training in the treatment of alcoholism. Individual and group substance abuse therapy clinics are numerous in all the tri-county areas around Detroit.

When addiction is physical and advanced detoxification process can be lifesaving. This usually occurs in a hospital over 4 to 8 days. Trying to detox without medical supervision can be lethal, especially in the first 24 - 72 hours.

Many years ago a man named Bill W. founded an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There are now more AA meetings than one can imagine. They can be found at all hours of the day and night, are free of charge, and have been scientifically shown to be the most effective treatment for alcoholism. The process involves talking and requires only 2 or more individuals with the desire to stay sober together for another hour. This is a structured, self-help, 12-Step program and is open to all.

When an individual presents himself, or is presented by life circumstances (such as a court order for drunk driving) for alcohol use problems, a trained substance abuse professional will conduct an assessment to determine the nature and extent of the problem. This will then lead to recommendations for a treatment program suitable for the patient's needs. The outcome could be individual therapy, inpatient residential treatment, group therapy, prescribing of Antabuse (a medication which blocks the metabolism of alcohol and renders the drinker violently ill as a deterrent to drinking) and will invariably include involvement with AA and the acquiring of a sponsor. A sponsor is like a coach who has demonstrated success in his/her own treatment and can now assist newcomers in learning and living the 12-Step program.

RESOURCES

1. Anyone can call general information and ask for the phone number of the nearest AA meeting in their community or look under Substance Abuse Clinics in the Yellow Pages.

2. Talk to your family doctor or primary health care provider. More physicians now that ever are trained, at least, in triage as regards problem drinking detection and referral to specialist.

3. From the bookstore: Alcoholics Anonymous; "The Big Book" by Bill W. Know that, by law, a police officer is required to transport an individual to the nearest hospital emergency room (not jail) if he/she is experiencing serious withdrawal symptoms which typically begin when blood concentrations of alcohol decline sharply, within 4-12 hours after heavy, chronic alcohol use had been stopped or reduced, in the more advanced addictive cases.

L.J. McCulloch is a Certified Addictions Counselor and is a diplomate of the American Psychotherapy Association. He is board-certified in Trauma and is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist. His column "Our Mental Health" appears in the Observer the first Thursday of each month. He can be reached at (248) 411-2763. Broke Rehabilitation Services Inc. of Farmington Hills where he is the director of Psychological Services.



Holiday songbirds

Our Lady of Sorrows Brownie Troop 1612 hung homemade cranberry wreath birdfeeders at the annual Girl Scout Holiday Sing held in December at Farmington City Hall. Pictured (left to right): Ellen Leever, Zoe Loidas, Jackie Claramito and Julia Padar.

Going Out Of Business Sale!!! UP TO 60% OFF

Last few weeks remaining before we close our doors for good on 1/15/03
Take advantage of the huge price savings on all popular collectible gift items.

Every Item In the store is on sale now!

60% off..... Seasonal Gift Items.

50% off..... All Greeting Cards, Enchantica, Barbie line, Memories of Yesterday & Maud Humphrey and Many More Items.

and up to 40% savings on:

Dolls, Emmett Kelly, Disney, Luney Tunes, Mugs, Harbor Lights, Boyd Bears, All God's Children, Snow Buddies, wedding accessories, Lenox, Waterford, Roman, Hudson, Hummel, Fantanini, Edna Hibel, Sandicast, Sandra Kuck, Franklin Mint, Snowbabies, Precious Moments, Windstone, Pool & Friends, Santos, Dept. 56 Villages & many more items!

Veena's
CARDS & COLLECTIBLES

37598 W. 12 Mile Road (at Halsted)
Farmington Hills • 248-489-4060
Store Hours: Mon.-Fri. 10-8; Sat. 10-6; Sun. 12-4

Also...Store Display Fixtures on Sale! All major credit cards accepted.

LA-Z-BOY Winter Price Break

This Week SAVE on our best-selling SOFAS by LA-Z-BOY

NOW ON SALE Starting At... \$799

These comfortable, stylish sofas are available in your choice of many unique and distinctive fabrics at ONE SALE PRICE!

Come in Today!!

Walker/Buzenberg
fine furniture

240 N. Main Street • PLYMOUTH • (734) 459-1300
Mon. - Thurs. 10-6 • Tues. - Wed. 10-6 • Sun. 11-5
Call 1-800-459-1300 • With Credit Approval, Financing Payments Apply
www.walkerbuzenberg.com

CARPET CENTER & floors

"NEW YEAR'S SALE"

FREE CREDIT

NO INTEREST!
NO PAYMENTS!
Until January 2004

50% OFF

Buy Today, Don't Pay 'Til 2004!

FREE LABOR

On Specialty Tugged Carpet
STAIRS-PLUSHES-LOOPS

It's Once A Year & It's Now!

<p>Glueless • Soap</p> <h2>Laminate</h2> <p>As Low As \$1.85 Sq. Ft.</p>	<p>3/4"</p> <h2>Hardwood</h2> <p>As Low As \$3.89 Sq. Ft.</p>
--	---

See Must Clear Out Inventory

SHOP AT HOME

1-800-CENTER-5