

Here's advice for relatives of aging alcoholics

By Sherry Kahan
staff writer

If Granny or Gramps start hitting the bottle, usually nobody knows. Sometimes nobody cares. When a person is old, let them have their booze — that's the standard reaction. After all, they don't have anything else.

In a recent speech at Madonna College, the coordinator of substance abuse services for older adults at Child and Family Service in Ann Arbor set her audience straight on the importance of getting the elderly treatment for alcoholism.

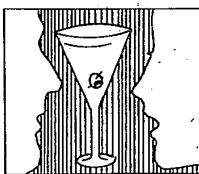
Linda Flynn-Breeden suggested the children of senior citizens also keep an eye out for over-medication problems. She spoke at a conference called "Caring for the Older Adult: Use and Misuse of Alcoholism and Medication." In an interview before her talk, she stressed that if the needs of the elderly are addressed in treatment, they respond better to treatment than the young. "They stay in treatment longer and

complete it more often. More recovery when they get out of the chemicals, and see what has been happening to them, they decide they don't have much time to mess around." In some cases the cure for over-medication has been to put the troubled senior on a drug holiday to take away all medication, she said. Then add one drug at a time to study the reaction. "I know of a woman who was on 13 different medications," reported Ms. Flynn-Breeden. "Ten of them were prescribed to treat the side effects of the other drugs."

WHILE SHE REGARDS over-medication as an important problem of the elderly, she indicated that "alcoholism is the most misunderstood, under-addressed and largest problem of that segment of the population." And often it is unrecognized. "The elderly alcoholics are the chronic drinkers who somehow managed to survive to old age," she said. "They are the social drinkers who became increasingly drunk in reaction to the stress of later life. This might be

loss of a spouse, retirement, loneliness and they get into it." "They drink to kill the pain, and alcohol then causes significant pain and isolation." She explained that alcohol caused a credible emotional pain. "They feel guilt and shame about broken promises," she said. "Their relationships have been damaged. If you can address the pain, then you can motivate them to get help. "They think that pain doesn't show, that they have covered it up with defenses."

Help could be on the way through a call to Child and Family Services from a family member or a neighbor who expresses concern. "We work with that person to get them to address the problems with the chemically dependent person," stated Ms. Flynn-Breeden. "We want the alcoholic to be willing to talk to a professional. At that point, the helper calls our agency." When the alcoholic calls the agency, Ms. Flynn-Breeden or a senior peer counselor goes to the house.



"Timing is crucial," she emphasized. "If a person agrees to get help, that's when a worker must go in. Five minutes from then, his defenses will click back in and make it difficult to reach him. He may even forget he agreed to get help. Distortion of memory is part of chemical dependency." The professionals approach problem drinkers in a caring, supportive way, showing they share their concerns. "We share what we see has been going on in their lives," she said. "The chemically dependent person can't see what others see about his behavior.

They usually feel a sense of relief that someone has finally noticed their pain. Of the interventions we have done, from 80-85 percent agree to get treatment."

After talking with the alcoholic, she usually recommends between two and three weeks of in-patient hospital treatment program as the first step toward recovery. "This is productive for them, because alcoholism usually causes significant physical problems such as ulcers, high blood pressure and malnutrition," observed the social worker. "They can get their physical needs met plus learn about their illness in a supportive setting. Going to the hospital gives their alcoholism an illness perspective rather than the moral perspective they have been giving it."

AFTER-CARE is an important ingredient of treatment, said Ms. Flynn-Breeden. "It will all fall apart if strong supports aren't built in on an out-patient basis," she said, adding that she has started a support group for these recovering seniors. She also does individual counseling.

While not all cases are successes, they are a good reason for Ms. Flynn-Breeden to keep working.

"A manager of a senior building called me to say she has started eviction proceedings against an alcoholic woman resident," she said. "I asked her to hold off a little because the threat might be used as a catalyst to get the woman to start treatment. When I visited the woman, I found she evidently hadn't eaten, was weak, trembling and nauseous. She was in such poor physical shape and feeling so rotten, it was easy to get her to go to the hospital for treatment. Previously, she had been rejected from another program because of her age. "Since then she has stayed sober eight months. We got her a job. She's functioning fairly well, and has a whole new circle of friends. She repaired relationships with her family. She began to enjoy her grandchildren. Before, she was too sick to care.

"We keep working on them," said the counselor. "But sometimes, before we reach them, they die. Alcoholism is a fatal illness."

Alcoholism: An economic toll

By Leonard Poger
staff writer

Persons with drinking problems are costing everyone else money. The extra costs are soaked into the prices of virtually all goods and services in the American economy.

The price tag for liquor-related problems in the economy was put at \$81 billion in 1979 by the National Alcoholism Council.

Most of that figure includes lost production time for employees. Another big chunk of money goes for the additional health and medical costs, including prepaid hospital insurance costs.

Other economic consequences of alcoholism include the cost of combating violent crime, fire losses, and maintaining social agencies created to help persons with drinking problems.

The economic costs of liquor problems averages \$274 for every person in America each year.

The former chairman of the world's third largest corporation, General Motors, told an audience 1½ years ago that alcoholism costs American business an estimated \$20 billion in lost production and related costs by year.

Crediting a 9-year-old GM treatment program, then-Chairman Thomas Murphy said about 44,000 employees have been helped.

Murphy also said any treatment program pays off in dollars and cents terms, not to mention the human benefits.

The former chairman said the GM program has resulted in substantial reductions — up to 60 percent in some cases — in lost production time, sickness and disability payouts, grievances, and on-the-job accidents.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT of alcoholism is also reflected in a federal government report to Congress nearly three years ago.

Save 20% on Temper-ware by Lenox and Hand-Blown Lenox Casual Crystal

Treat yourself to Temper-ware from Wiggs China Shop! It's the colorful, casual dinnerware by Lenox that's right for any lifestyle. SAVE 20% off our year 'round special set prices on 20-piece sets for four and 5-piece Service Sets.

Stronger than any ironstone, stoneware or earthenware, Temper-ware carries a full two-year warranty against breaking, chipping, cracking and crazing. You can take the cook-and-serve pieces straight from an icy freezer and pop them into a hot oven (even a micro-wave).

Also, SAVE 20% off open stock prices on coordinating hand-blown Lenox Casual Crystal in all popular shapes and colors when purchased in multiples of four-of-a-kind. Save on all active patterns now... sale ends 5/24/81.



WE HONOR VISA CARD, MASTER CARD AND WIGGS PLAN 25



OPEN MONDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY 'TIL 9 P.M.

Telegraph at Long Lake Bloomfield Hills • 644-7370

BERNARD MANELI AND MANUEL FOX OF
Diamond Jewelers Inc.
WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT THEY HAVE MOVED TO A NEW LOCATION AT 4085 WEST MAPLE AT TELEGRAPH BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN 48010 (313) 647-1470 YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO VISIT OUR NEW MODERN SHOWROOM

CREATIVE LANDSCAPING
Call us for ideas on:
• Landscape Design
• Re-landscaping
• Trees, Evergreens & Plantings
• Patios, Decks, Terraces
• Solutions to Problem Areas
• Improves the beauty & use of your homestead.
CALL JACK MOLITOR AT 651-2929 west bloomfield
SITE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION INC.

A Weekend of New York
starring the **Big Apple Menagerie**
A RAY BUCKLEY/RANDY JOHNSON PRODUCTION
The world's only International Hair and Fashion Theatrical Modeling Troupe on a 40 city National Tour.
Shows at **Twelve Oaks:** MAY 1, 2 and 3. Friday and Saturday: 12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30 Sunday: 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00
PRIZES, GIVEAWAYS... SALES GALORE IN EVERY STORE!
Register to win a Free Trip for 2 to New York via Pan Am.
Hotel accommodations at Hamilton, Miller, Hudson & Wayne Travel Corporation. Entry blanks available at Information Booth.
"A Weekend of New York" presented by
ROYAL CROWN COLA **TRC** DIET RITE sugar free cola **twelve oaks mall** NOV1 ROAD, NORTH OF I-96, NOV1

May Calendar of Events
Exciting Opportunity to Learn and Save throughout our 15 Furniture Galleries.
Something is "going on" every day at Wiggs during May! Come, see it all — an outstanding collection of Traditional and Country Furniture in oval-shaped, tastefully appointed groupings and gallery settings.
Please accept this invitation to our gala "happenings" during the Month of May, 1981. Every day will be exciting! Marvelous furniture and accessory values await you, plus some really fine "in store" events. Check and double check our calendar, and note the dates on our calendar. For your convenience, our HENREDON and HARDEN Upholstery Sales and some super selected specials in our Ethan Allen Gallery are scheduled for every day in May. While our French Festival Week and Hitchcock Sale Days are of shorter duration, they are sure to be fun!
HENREDON FINE UPHOLSTERY SALE IN THE COLONNADE, 'TIL MAY 30th.
When quality is truly important, and when design requirements are very precise, think of Henredon! Each piece of Henredon Upholstered Furniture offers a wealth of choices of stunning fabrics and classic design. DURING THE MONTH OF MAY WE ARE OFFERING 20% OFF OUR COMPLETE HENREDON UPHOLSTERY COLLECTION! What a great opportunity to select the uncompromising quality of Henredon and enjoy the excellent customer service, too! Choose from Sofas, Loveseats, Chairs, Rockers and Ottomans from Henredon's Upholstery series.
FRENCH FESTIVAL WEEK THROUGHOUT OUR 15 GALLERIES, MAY 11 TO 16.
Chef Sterling B. Maxfield, from La Marmite French Restaurant in Detroit, will be conducting 2 French Cuisine Cooking Classes on May 11th. We will also feature Demonstrations of real and silk flower arranging — "Sterling Show, "French Inspirations" — to take you to the great Chateaux of France. Wine n' Cheese Party with the show. A showing of Original Oil Paintings and, from our China Shop, French Crystal and China displays in our Ethan Allen Chateau Normandy, Henredon Valencay and Hickory Provence Galleries.
HARDEN UPHOLSTERY SALE, HARMAN GALLERY, 'TIL MAY 30th.
Exciting 20% SALE ON FINE TRADITIONAL UPHOLSTERY CRAFTED BY THE HANDS OF HARDEN! Harden's luxurious and elegant Sofas, Loveseats, Chairs and Ottomans are fashioned in a wide variety of styles echoing 18th and 19th century European and American designs. Design your own... in the fabric of your choice, you will find in the Harden Collection some of the loveliest fabrics in the world... a thousand tempting designs and colors in natural or synthetic materials. Whatever your upholstery needs, there is a Harden design to enhance your room setting.
OUR ANNUAL HITCHCOCK SALE, MAY 14, 15 AND 16th!
Our versatile Hitchcock Collection encompasses a rich heritage, including meticulous attention to each and every detail of the 1800's Lambert Hitchcock reproductions. OUR ENTIRE HITCHCOCK GALLERY IS ON SALE, including beds, dressers, chests, mirrors, occasional tables, dining room tables, buffets, hutches, servers, benches and chairs. SAVE 25% TO 35%! The Hitchcock craftsmanship of today combines many finishes and interesting designs with beautifully detailed gold decorations. Mark our great sale dates on your calendar today!
SPRING SALE IN OUR ETHAN ALLEN GALLERY, 'TIL MAY 30th
Now is the time to save on selections from beautiful, superbly-crafted Ethan Allen upholstery (Sofas, Loveseats, Resilient Recliners, Sleepers and Modular Sofas), some Occasional Tables, Clocks, Lamps and Accessories. We offer over 800 exquisite, durable, protected fabrics and colors for your selections. And, our expert Interior Designers are ready to assist you with all selections including color scheme and floor plans.
Open Mon., Thurs. & Fri. 'til 9
4800 TELEGRAPH AT LONG LAKE ROAD (16-MILE) BLOOMFIELD HILLS • 644-7370