

Alcoholism and students

By: Ritchie Rolfe

Anne M.*, a third year student at UPEI had her first drink, her first experience of its effects and her first blackout at the age of 15. She was curious about the effects of alcohol. Over the next year she began experimenting with pot and hashish. Her marks slipped from an honours student to the 50-60 percent range. When Anne was twenty, she decided to go to her first Narcotics Anonymous meeting with the intention of quitting her marijuana addiction. She had attempted to quit several times throughout the previous year but had found it extremely difficult. While Anne was in the NA program she realized that she was denying her alcohol addiction and that in order to quit one, she would have to quit both. Before Anne quit, she was smoking about 3-4 joints of pot or hash a day, and spent 3-4 days of the week drinking. She began attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Anne was asked whether she noticed any changes in her perspective after she quit. Her reply was, "Yes, about 180 degree turn; from the priority in life to remain 'high' oblivious to what was going on around, oriented towards getting a drink, joint, a party, to learning to live without those things, becoming a useful member of society, and working towards goals I never thought possible. Most important is that I respect myself when before I didn't."

She was then asked that since she hasn't drunk for a while, what she now thinks her reasons were for drinking. Anne said that there was a difference between starting and continuing. "Adolescence is a difficult time in life. I continued because alcohol gave me what I was looking for, confidence, happiness (at the time), it made me sociable and not so shy and withdrawn. It took away loneliness, periodically, then it (loneliness) would intensify as the hangover came."

"Often people say there's an imaginary line that they cross

after a period of social drinking whereby they become alcoholics. For me, there was no imaginary line, nor was there a time when I drank socially. When I picked up that first drink at 15, I became an alcoholic. From that time on, when I drank, I was powerless over alcohol. I could not control how much I drank nor what the results of my drinking would be, which was often blackouts."

Anne is presently in her third year at UPEI and has a part-time job in the Charlottetown area.

The illnesses of alcohol and drug addiction are probably one of the few diseases in the world that medicine will not remedy. Alcoholism as defined by the World Health Organization, is a disease characterized by the compulsive use of beverage alcohol, resulting in continuing life problems for the user. The key to understanding addiction is the word compulsive. What is the reason for this compulsion which will drive the person use the chemical, despite its obvious detrimental effects?

Alcoholics Anonymous, which is a worldwide fellowship of men and women who help each other to maintain sobriety, views that the symptoms of alcoholism are different for each person, but many (alcoholics) — at different stages in the illness — show these signs: They find that alcohol can make them feel self-confident and at ease with other people; often want "just one more" at the end of the party; look forward to drinking occasions and think about them a lot; get drunk when they had not planned to; try to control their drinking by changing types of liquor, going on the wagon, or taking pledges; sneak drinks; lie about their drinking; hide bottles; drink at work (or in school); drink alone; fail to eat and become malnourished, shake violently, hallucinate or have convulsions when withdrawn from liquor.

Lorne R.*, a freshman at UPEI began to drink and smoke marijuana at the age of 17. As his

addiction progressed his interest in other mind altering drugs increased. In his words, "I just wanted to get 'higher'. Some people push themselves to the limit in exercise, I pushed my brain to it's limit with drugs. After a while, nothing seemed to work, I couldn't get higher. I was at a standstill. I drank beer like some people drink coffee, smoked joints as if they were cigarettes, and took chemicals once in a while like some people take aspirin. I didn't even hide it. One day I decided to quit. It was the only choice I had left. All of the other roads were blocked. My reasoning was simple. I said to myself, Lorne, you were not born drunk, or stoned. This is not a natural high. So I decided to quit and become a social drinker instead. Two days later while I was in a bar being social, I thought that there was no point in drinking one or two beer if I was not going to get drunk so I decided not to drink at all. But this was not as easy as it sounded. I had to learn how to socialize, learn how to talk, but more importantly I had to learn how to be honest with myself and everyone. It took me at least 6 months to admit to myself that I was an alcoholic. Now I've been sober for almost 2 years and I am still recovering from a 5 year party. Physically I'm 24; mentally, 19".

Charlottetown has several centres where an alcoholic may go for treatment. Talbot House on Kent St. is the oldest. It began operation in the early 1960's. It has a 1-4 month program to provide support for individuals early in recovery of alcohol and drug dependency. The Treatment Centre on McGill Ave., began in 1964 and it provides a few services. One is detoxification which is a short term (4-15 days) medical facility, where an initial assessment is made of the person and it provides treatment for those with severe withdrawal symptoms. In 1970 a rehabilitation program was added. This is a 19-21 day program including education in

therapy, peer involvement, and one to one counselling.

In 1976 an Alcohol and Drug Institute was established. Many services and programs are provided here ranging from an Out-patient program which gives treatment for alcohol and chemical dependencies, families and adolescents by means of education and one to one counselling. Grant Killorn, a BBA graduate from UPEI (1976), works at the alcohol and Drug Institute. He stated that more and more young people are making up a greater percentage of the participants. He added that over 80% of people under 25 are children of alcoholics.

Within the illness of alcohol and drug addiction, several aspects of the personality are involved ranging from physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual dependencies. Dependencies on an artificial stimulant to substitute what is otherwise misplaced. When the alcoholic or drug addict makes the decision to quit, the dependency is then upon himself. Anxiety, stress, and role changes are part of the process. A New York stockbroker and an Ohio surgeon who had both been hopeless "drunks" realized the problems of staying sober and started Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935. A.A. helps the alcoholic through example and friendship of recovered alcoholics. Instead of swearing off forever the bottle, AA encourages members to stay away "one day at a time". Concentrating on today rather than next week. To become a member is simple, the only prerequisite is the desire to stay sober.

Today doctors, psychologists and recovered alcoholics know that there are specific symptoms to define alcoholism. The pattern is different for each person. One problem that surfaces is that the majority of alcoholic-dependent persons will deny the existence of these symptoms as they arise. Denial is the main stumbling block of alcoholism. The question of alcoholism does **not necessarily hinge on how much or how often**

an individual drinks, but rather how he drinks — how he looks upon alcohol — how much it means (meant) to him. In order to qualify as a person having alcoholism, one need identify with only four of the eight symptoms.

1. Pre-occupation with use

Did you sometimes look forward to using alcohol or to getting high three or four times a week when you should have been thinking about something else?

2. Rapid Intake

What was your intention when you used alcohol? Did you gulp or sneak your drinks? Did you drink before a social event?

3. Use Alone

Did you sometimes drink alone — at home, in a bar? Did it make any difference to you that there was no one else around when you were drinking?

4. Unplanned Use

Did you ever go farther than you knew you should have or thought you should? Did you ever go farther than you intended to go?

5. Protect Your Supply

Did you ever stock up — just in case you would be caught short? Did you ever hide your bottles?

6. Relief of Discomfort

Did you ever drink because you were nervous, up-tight, sad or depressed?

7. Increase in Tolerance

Were you able to drink remarkable quantities of alcohol and not show it too much? Did you have the reputation of a "two-fisted drinker"?

8. Did you ever experience "holes in your memory" during a

drinking episode? Ever wake up in the morning after, wondering how you got home or where you were the night before?

*pseudonym

Cockroaches find cozy home in cafeteria

OTTAWA (CUP) — Cockroaches have found a comfortable home in Carleton University's residence commons kitchen despite attempts by Saga food staff to evict them.

Dave Cole, a Carleton student living in residence, said he met his first cockroach while serving himself salad in the residence kitchen.

"I felt this thing climbing up

my arm and looked down and it was a cockroach," he said.

Staff at Saga foods who refused to be identified said they've also noticed an increase in the number of cockroaches. One Saga employee said cockroaches have been sighted floating in the heating tubs that keep food warm.

"I remember one time when I

was filling a plate and a cockroach ran right across the counter. I almost died, I was so embarrassed," said the employee.

The cockroaches are frightening other more squeamish staff away from the kitchen at night.

"I walked into the dish room one night to bring in some dirty dishes and I turned on the light

and saw four or five scampering across the floor ... One girl told me not to go in when it was dark because it was 'creepy' and that's when they breed," said another Saga staffer.

Frank Gillett, Saga food services director attributes the increase in the number of cockroaches to a recent spraying which drove them out of the walls.

One female cockroach can reproduce up to 20,000 times a year under poor conditions; in ideal conditions, this figure can reach 50,000, said an employee of PCO Ltd., an extermination and fumigation service in Hull.

"They can feed off a little blob of grease that can keep the little guys going to perpetuity," added Gillett.