

# 'I never wanted to get drunk, I just liked the taste'

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the fifth in the Courier and Freeman's continuing series of interviews with former practicing alcoholics. These interviews are presented here in an attempt to provide some insights into the world of the alcoholic.

By Mike Billington  
Managing-Editor  
"You know, I always drank alone. I guess I just couldn't stand people who acted drunk."

The man who spoke those words is an alcoholic...although he hasn't been a practicing alcoholic for some years now. We'll call him Fred.

Of the many kinds of alcoholics there are in this nation today, the kind of alcohol abuser that Fred used to be is often one of the hardest to spot.

Fred was a loner...he liked to be alone and he liked to DRINK alone. He never used to drink just for the "thrill" of getting drunk. He wasn't out to prove that he could be "one of the boys."

Fred just liked the taste of a shot of whiskey.

"I guess I started drinking really early...I had my first drink when I was only about five years of age. I drank all through high school and I was a loner when I drank. I had friends, but I never drank with them, I just preferred to drink alone," he said.

He added that "during my high school days I was asked to go home several

**Larabay on exercise**  
Navy Fire Control Technician Third Class Terry J. Larabay, 23, son of Stella M. Larabay of Norfolk, is participating in the naval exercise "UNITAS XVII," as a crewmember aboard the guided missile destroyer USS Mac Donough, homeported at Charleston, S.C.

The exercise marks the seventeenth consecutive year that U.S. warships and aircraft have operated with naval forces from South American nations in joint training maneuvers. It is designed to test and improve the combat readiness of the participating units for the protection of the southern sealanes of the Western Hemisphere.

As a cooperative venture, UNITAS is the product of joint planning at every step. During the actual operation, the principle of cooperation will be demonstrated by the rotation of command among units of all participating nations.

UNITAS XVII began when U.S. and Brazilian task groups rendezvoused at Port Everglades, Florida. The U.S. Navy task group will circumnavigate the South American continent, operating with ships of Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. Bilateral exercises will be held with each country's naval task group off their respective coasts. The U.S. task group has visited Rio de Janeiro and Recife, Brazil, and will be making port visits at other South American countries during the cruise. His ship is expected to complete the exercise by mid-November and return to Charleston, S.C.

A graduated of Norwood-Norfolk Central High School, Norwood, he joined the Navy in June, 1974.

times-not because I was drunk because they could smell booze on my breath. I graduated in defiance because they told me that I never would make it through school if I kept up drinking but I thought they didn't know what they were talking about and I finished school anyway."

"I couldn't admit then that I couldn't control my drinking."  
Married at 18, he and his wife both landed jobs with the state government. At that time he was drinking five of the seven days in a week. After three years he and his wife left their work and came to the North Country.

**PATTERN CHANGE**  
It was when he arrived in St. Lawrence County that his pattern of drinking changed.

"I don't know why, but I became what you'd call a weekend drinker. For 12 years I never drank during the week but come Friday night and lasting through the early evening on Sunday I drank my share. I was still a lone wolf drinker and I'd drink at home or maybe go out and take a ride and drink in my car. After about 12 years, however, my weekends began to get longer," he declared.

He started drinking on Thursday nights and missing work on Mondays.

## Bus routes noted

Regular bus service for Potsdam Central School will begin on Tuesday, September 7, 1976. The bus routes will be similar to last year's with the following exceptions: All high school routes will remain the same as last year. The Elementary route in Hannawa Falls will change with one bus, Bus 59, picking up all children in the Hannawa area and a small unit picking up students on the Parmeter Road, Sweeney Road, and Root Road.

Every effort is being made to provide safe transportation at a reasonable cost. Continued cooperation among the drivers, parents, students, and the transportation supervisor will make a difficult task easier and more beneficial for all, according to Transportation Supervisor Stewart Talcott.

Exact bus routing can be obtained by calling the transportation office at 265-2000, ext. 35.

## Guild sponsors weavers classes

The Northern Adirondack Weavers Guild is sponsoring a beginner's weaving class to start Monday evening September 13 at 7 p.m. in the Home Economics room at the Potsdam High School, Room 121.

No experience is needed. Frame looms to be provided for the six-week course. Ten looms are available. \$13 fee plus \$3 materials charge. For information call Linne Miller, 265-6797.

There will also be an advanced frame loom class starting on Wednesday evening, September 15 at 7 p.m. This will be an eight-week course for those who have had the beginner's weaving course earlier.

The class will meet in the Potsdam High School Home Economics Room 121. Three will be a \$16 charge for this course. Call 265-6797 for information.

**COVER-UP**  
At his job his boss and other employees covered-up for him. By the summer of 1969 he was a daily drinker-someone who is physically addicted to alcohol.

Even then he would not admit that he was an alcoholic. He laid the blame on his fear that he was going insane. "I felt that I was going insane," he said, "and I asked to have myself committed. They took me and put me in an alcohol rehabilitation cottage for one month. I stayed the full time and then managed about nine months worth of sobriety. I was dry, but I wasn't yet sober and I was miserable. I felt so miserable that one day I just started drinking again. I spent another year on the bottle during which I even spent 14 days in the hospital...but as soon as I got out I went back into drinking as heavily as before."

In 1971 he went back into the rehabilitation center but following his treatment he left with reservations. And he was "convinced that I could drink socially."

He spent approximately 11 months in a semi-dry state before going back on the bottle again heavily.

He went down hard and fast. "I didn't care about my job, I figured I'd lost my family because of my drinking and I even tried to commit suicide. I'm not very proud of that but it shows you just how much of an affect alcohol can have on your life."

After attempting to take his life he spent time in a mental institution and then four weeks in a rehabilitation center.

"When I came out I knew I was beaten as far as alcohol was concerned. I had been in and out of Alcoholics Anonymous for three years. I couldn't admit defeat but after the last time I came out of the center I could; I knew I was beaten."

He left his job because he did not feel that he could stay away from alcohol if he returned to that environment. He became self employed for two years before going to work at his present job.

"INDESCRIBABLE"  
"Being an alcoholic is really an indescribable feeling," he commented. "I just don't know how to describe the feelings of remorse, guilt, the fears and the sickness. In the daylight I used to pray that it would get dark and when it did get dark I prayed for the light. I guess the only way you can understand it is to live through it and God help you."

**Moulton reelected**  
George Moulton was reelected as Master of Madrid Grange when election of officers was held on Wednesday night at the regular meeting of the order.

Other officers reelected were: Overseer, Earl Moulton; Lecturer, Elva Moulton; Steward, Wayne Hunter; Assistant steward, Steve Reed; Lady assistant steward, Alice Reed.

Also: Chaplain, George Beckstead; Sec. and treas. Leila Hunter; Gate Keeper, Miller Nelson; Ceres, Mary Nelson; Pomona Lida Jesmer; Flora, Mildred Childs.

Olive Moulton is chairperson for the executive committee. Installation will be held at the next meeting.

**Sierra Club opposes power line, plants**  
The Sierra Club's local group has contacted Governor Hugh Carey to express its strong opposition to nuclear power plants and PASNY's proposed 765 Ky line.

The group told Carey that it opposed the 765 KV line and nuclear plants on safety and environmental grounds. It pointed out "deadly induced shocks and electromagnetic radiation which could have undetermined biological effects."

It also noted that the line was just a preparation for an effort to put nuclear power plants in the North Country.

The group said that "it would be callous to disregard the scenic beauty and major industries of Northern New York-dairying and tourism-all for a power line which is not needed."

**Bar B Que date set**  
The annual chicken Bar B Que of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Chipman will be held September 11.

Serving begins at 4:30 p.m. until all served. Adults \$3 and children \$1.50. There will also be take out dinners. Various booths will include garden, food, candy, and gifts.

anyone who has to live through it."  
He noted that during his first withdrawal from alcohol, in 1969, he had gone through symptoms which included hallucinations and convulsions "but I still couldn't see it. I shifted all the blame to my belief that I was going insane; I just could not accept the fact that I was an alcoholic. Acceptance for me was when I finally said to myself 'you just do not have any willpower.' After I said that to myself and believed it I left my job-a good job because I knew I was just not strong enough to stay off the bottle. If I'd gone back to drinking I'd have killed myself...and this time without wanting to."

**REASONS**  
Fred noted that there were several reasons why he became an alcoholic the least of which was the fact that his boss and his co-workers used to cover-up for him.

"They almost killed me with kindness," he said.

"I hated a drunk, to me they were just stupid and obnoxious. I couldn't stand to be around one because they were always falling down and acting silly. That's why I drank alone, I just didn't want to be around any drunks. If I had drunk with other people maybe someone would

have told me that I looked foolish but no-one ever did so I kept on thinking that I could control my drinking and not let anyone know."

**AA ONLY HELP**  
Fred maintains that only Alcoholics Anonymous could help him recover from being an alcohol abuser.

"I've been to priests, psychologists-one of them told me that if I'd quit being a loner and make some new friends I'd stop drinking-and doctors. None of them could help. The only people that can help because they're the only ones who can understand the problem- are those who work with AA. Without AA I would probably be dead right now."

AA also serves to help keep him off the bottle. For a former drinker there is a large void in the day that used to be taken up by drinking. For Fred that void is now filled with AA meetings.

**BPW to host meeting**  
The Potsdam Chapter of Business and Profession Women will host the District XI fall meeting on September 25 at the Sunset Lodge. All BPW members are invited to attend.

The Registration fee is \$12 including the dinner and can be mailed to Shirley Peterson; 96 Elm Street; Potsdam.

"It's my social life and it gives me a chance to get out of the house with my family in a pleasant situation."

"I just can't say enough about it," he concluded.

Fred never drank to prove anything. He just liked the way a shot of whiskey tasted.

He liked it so much it almost killed him.

## Hill to lecture

Christopher Hill, distinguished Oxford historian and Master of Balliol College, will be a visiting lecturer at S.U.C.P. (Potsdam State College) campus for three days-September 20, 21, and 22. His three public lectures will be given in the Fireside Lounge, Student Union Building, Potsdam State College Campus. The schedule is: September 20-8 p.m.- "Radical Puritanism", September 21-8 p.m.- "The Heritage of the English Revolution," September 22-3:30 p.m.- "Milton"

Hill is a scholar of international reputation. He is best known for his works on English Puritanism and the Revolution of 1640. He is currently making a study of Milton. His most recent book is "Charge and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England."

# Courier & Freeman

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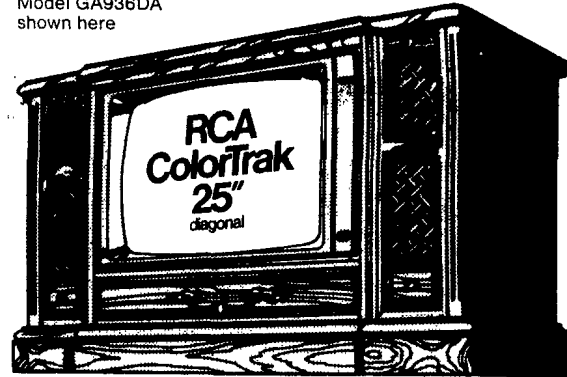
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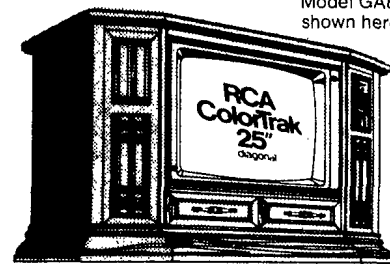
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