

Editorials and Commentary

Many wives drink alone

There is a lot more alcoholism among housewives than is suspected or discovered, says a noted sociologist.

J.W. Bedell, professor and chairman of the department of sociology at California State University at Fullerton, said that many alcoholic housewives are "9 a.m. to 3 p.m. drinkers" who drink only during school hours when they are alone.

Bedell said a great many housewives, when they begin to fear that their drinking has been noticed by neighbors, persuade their husbands to move to another town and get a new job.

According to Bedell, about two thirds of women drinkers had husbands who were alcoholics, and a third of them had alcoholic fathers.

"This is in marked contrast to the general population in which figures show that only about two per cent of people grow up in families with alcoholic fathers," Bedell said.

Some psychologists have theorized that many alcoholic women grew up in homes where the father adjusted "orally" to day-to-day tensions.

"That is, little compulsive habits such as biting fingernails, gnawing knuckles, working jaw muscles, and chewing the lower lip."

Two other important examples are smoking and heavy drinking. Social psychologists call these habits "oral indulgences," and consider them an indication of emotional weakness.

Their theory, if correct, holds that women who grew up with fathers who are oral indulgers may have learned how to regard men from the way their passive and weak fathers were treated by their mothers.

"That is, they may have learned to treat husbands with disrespect, either overt or covert, and may have subconsciously chosen husbands who were passive like their fathers," Bedell said.

The natural emotional complications of marriage are thus made more involved and difficult for them to cope with.

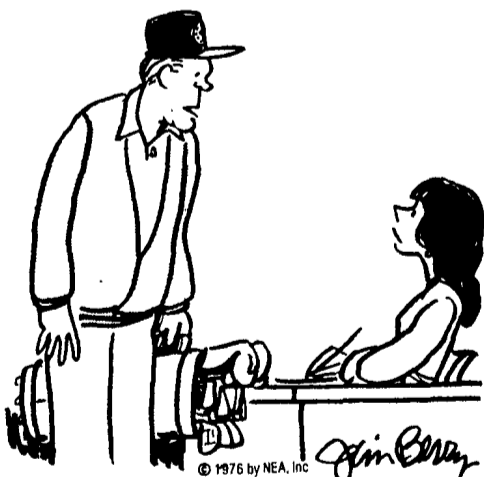
In interviews last summer with women in detoxification and rehabilitation programs, Bedell found that most were trapped in pathological marriages.

"A large percentage were beaten by their husbands, were vilified and constantly criticized by them and made to feel worthless," he said.

Another reason alcoholic housewives may be more difficult to detect, according to Bedell, is that women in general seem to function better than men after a long period of drinking.

For more information on women and drinking, contact the St. Lawrence County Alcohol Referral Service, Van Housen Hall, State University College at Potsdam (Telephone: 265-6190-extension 18).

Berry's World



"If Bob Dole calls, for gosh sakes, don't tell him where I am!"

Courier & Freeman

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THE ARLINGTON INN, one of the landmarks of downtown Potsdam, has officially reopened its doors after almost 18 months of dormancy. The new owners are gearing the hotel to college students and have figured rates on a semester basis. (Will Brady Photo).

More on the peanut butter mentality

By Mike Billington's Wife

Women's lib notwithstanding, being married (and being a mother) can lead a woman to a state of frustration that we have come to call "peanut butter mentality."

Let us hasten to explain—there is a (perhaps deservedly) obscure brand of peanut butter called "Somebody's Mom," which, we are asked to believe, makes sandwiches that "taste like they were made by somebody's mom."

Without getting into any arguments about just whose mom they had in mind, let us proceed.

For years now, despite our having perfectly respectable names—first, maiden and married, not to mention a middle name, we have been, as far as our speaking acquaintances go, either somebody's wife or somebody's mom.

Which is to say that whenever our acquaintances speak about us at all, they seldom use those nice names our mothers gave us, or even the ones our fathers gave us.

We've got ourselves in a rut. At a party someone says "Hey, Charlie, c'mere and meet Mike Billington's wife." Charlie comes over, and since he doesn't have any other handle to grab us by, he makes small talk about the only thing he knows about us, and asks us all kinds of questions about good old Mike—how he feels about The Rolling Stone, or Jimmy Carter, or whether he likes pistachios.

And then he makes another introduction: "Hey, Elwood, this little lady here is Mike Billington's wife. Oh you don't know Mike? He's the blond guy over there with pistachios on his breath." And the "little lady" is lost in the shuffle as they both head off to meet good ole Mike.

Or we go to a job interview and the supervisor says, even before he's noticed whether you have good legs, "Oh, are YOU Mike Billington's wife?" Half an hour later, we wonder when he's going to get around to ask if we can type. (As a matter of fact, we

can, and just as well as M.B. can). But no, he makes a call and says into the receiver, "I'm interviewing Mike Billington's wife...oh yes, she had a semester at SUCCP..." and we frantically wave and gesture at the back of his head as we watch all those grubby credits we earned from Kent State go for naught, because they were earned before we were Mike Billington's wife.

No doubt, to a large extent we've helped ourselves into this same rut. We've been Jim Levitt's wife for so long that we're conditioned to it and are rather comfortable in it. So at a party when someone comes up and says "Hello, who are you?" we automatically respond "I'm Jim Levitt's wife...teaches at State, from Utah...colonial history...voted for Kissinger for king...hates anchovies..."

We were left speechless and completely charmed by the fellow who patiently listened through it all and then said, "Yes, but who are YOU?" It's a good question.

Then there's this fellow we know who was the only male spouse at a convention attended by his wife. Of all the activities planned for the convention wives, the only one he thought he could handle was bowling.

But they wouldn't let him compete because he wasn't a wife. Eventually they relented because after all, he wasn't anyone's wife through no fault of his own, and he competed in his own special category. He didn't say whether he won or lost.

Still, things have a way of getting better. The other day we overheard someone saying "Levitt? Oh, you must be Victoria Levitt's husband." And while he modestly admitted that he was, we rejoiced inwardly—recognition at last. Now we have a name of our own.

It was too good to be true. Someone else piped up, "who is Victoria Levitt?" "Oh, you know her. She's Ethan's mom."

Oh, well, back to the peanut butter jar. Pass the jelly and be thankful we're not married to Henry VIII.

"No, nothing like that. Bill Reiss has your type... blood but you both volunteered to help a dying cancer patient."

Still Steve was unimpressed. It didn't make any difference who got his blood. "We'll take you first," the doctor said, "and perhaps we will need Bill later."

Then he explained that the cancer patient was so susceptible to even the most minor infections that his room was kept as germ-free as possible, with sterile technique maintained all around. White blood cells were needed to help him fight the infections.

"Your blood will be shunted through a machine where it will give up many of your white blood cells. It will continue on back into your body and continue this circulation until we have the desired amount of white cells."

The process, Steve was told, would take three hours. There were certain dangers, one of which was spasms of the veins. All sorts of warning devices would be in operation, and the process would be interrupted if necessary.

The doctor said that the process had been used for only a couple of years, and that during that time only two donors had gone through it without having the warning buzzer sound. Most problems were easily corrected.

"Only one pint of blood will be out of your body at a time," the doctor said,

"I've been wanting to tell you this story for several weeks and because it is a bit unusual and certainly points up the great achievements science can reach, I will tell it now."

My son, Steve, works for an electronics firm in Southern California. One day he was approached by a technician from Long Beach Hospital. He was told that since he had A-positive blood and they needed him over at the hospital.

"One of your co-workers, Bill Reiss, also has A-positive blood and..." he said, and Steve, not paying too much attention to the rest of what he said, and with the thought that his friend needed blood, hurriedly answered, "Sure, I'll be glad to go over."

The next morning he went through a series of tests, and was finally ushered into the doctor's office.

"You know, of course, what you've gotten yourself into?" the doctor asked. "Sure, I'm going to give Bill Reiss some blood."

Editor's note...

In this week's edition of the Courier and Freeman Republican challenger for the Assembly Dave Martin has come out in opposition to nuclear power.

Martin, who has not taken many definite positions (thus far, also comes out for "handsome" compensations for those people who will have portions of their land used by the

Power Authority of the State of New York for the construction of its proposed 765 kv power line.

If he means what he says environmentalists in the North Country may have found a powerful ally in Martin whether he wins or loses since he will still retain his seat in the St. Lawrence County legislature if he is defeated. His newly stated viewpoints on both subjects are not terribly different from his opponent Dan Haley's in this respect and Haley has long been regarded as a friend by ecology minded folks.

Also in this edition of the Courier and Freeman we are carrying an article which describes what a simple blunder in Albany can do to a local school system.

The Potsdam Central School district should be collecting taxes today. It isn't because it was not notified of a special equalization rate set by the state for the Town of Pierrepont. According to school superintendent Carlos Gutierrez, this means that the current tax levy will have to be redistributed: a job which requires the extra expenditure of both time and money since the levy which had been calculated took into account what has become the wrong tax rate for Pierrepont.

This points up a very serious need for a new examination of the call for 100 percent evaluation of property. If New York State had taxes based on the 100 percent system this mess never would have occurred and the time and money would not have to be wasted due to the fact that someone in Albany forgot to tell someone in Potsdam that the equalization rate for Pierrepont had been changed.

This will not mean a terribly high raise in the amount of money which district residents who do not live in Pierrepont will have to pay, but it will mean a raise coming at a time when unemployment is beginning to make its customary upward spiral with the closing of construction jobs and other seasonal employment opportunities.

Assessments based on 100 per cent worth of property are more equitable than the current system and with the BEC example serving as a shining beacon—less likely to become snafu.

For those so inclined, the Democratic Party's primary vote is next Tuesday. Democrats will be asked to decide which of five candidates they want to oppose Senator James Buckley for the right to sit in Washington for six years. The Courier and Freeman concludes, with this issue, a series of interviews with those five people prepared by freelance writer Will Brady.

The series will hopefully provide voters with some insight into which of the five candidates will make not only the best POLITICAL choice (that is: which will make the strongest showing against Buckley) but also the best REAL choice should he or she become elected.

After the primary shootout has been decided we are planning on a similar

RESTITUTO DOMINGO, MD, peers through equipment at the Potsdam unit of the Central St. Lawrence Health Services. The only chest surgeon in the county, he noted that local residents no longer have to go long distances for chest surgery—either diagnostic or corrective. Domingo has been at CSLHS since late spring.

"But now that you understand the situation, you do not have to go through with it unless you want to."

"Shucks," Steve said, "I've gone this far, I might as well take it all the way."

So began what was to be an ordeal of lying flat on his back for three hours and remaining absolutely still. He could not even be allowed a sip of water.

"Yeah, I was a little scared at first," he admitted, "Some strong thoughts were running through my head, knowing that my blood was giving up my own infection-fighting cells."

But most of the time it was an interesting operation. Nurses and doctors were constantly coming in to watch the process, ask questions and lend a little moral support.

Twice during the procedure the warning buzzer sounded and whatever was amiss was given attention.

After the cells were caught in the trap they were released by tapping the trap with a leather hammer.

Steve in a telephone conversation with me later, said that he was asked how much he thought this fantastic machine cost, to which he answered, "Oh, probably \$100,000."

Then he asked me how much I thought the machine cost, to which I meekly answered, "Closer to \$500,000, maybe?"

Nope, just \$3,000 and most of the money was spent in tubing.

(Lily, the estimate wizard strikes again!)

"Boy!" Steve exclaimed, "I was made out like a hero. Everybody acted like I'd done something great."

"When I got back to work even all the bosses came to me and shook my hand. You'd thought I was the first man on the moon."

At this writing Steve is still chipper. Bill Reiss was not needed at the time.

Have you ever been in doubt when you are donating money to charities?

It is things like this, the constant quest to find ways in which sick people can find new hope and are granted a little more time, that make breakthroughs so dramatic.

You don't see the never-ending research, but every now and then the results pop out, and here we are with one more step ahead in the fight to banish disease.

And you can always say, "I helped."

DEBBIE KAPLAN as retired as a pediatrician after 27 years in Potsdam. A tip of the hat to this remarkable woman who has seen many of Potsdam's children through all kinds of sneezes and diseases. (Viki Levitt Photo).

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