

Alcohol is bad for your health

by Bonnie Seal

Alcoholism is becoming rampant in American society, and one of the chief pushers is advertising.

One of four American teenagers is an alcoholic or problem drinker. There are ten million alcoholics in the United States. Sixty-two per cent of seventh graders and eighty per cent of twelfth graders have had alcoholic beverages. These statistics were quoted by media analyst and advertising critic Jean Kilbourne, who spoke on alcohol and the ads last week at the University of Portland.

Alcohol is the number one cause of death among persons age 15 through 21 through motor vehicle accidents, drowning, murder, and suicide. More than 400 people die in alcohol related crashes every week, Ms. Kilbourne said.

"Advertising produces a psychic numbing process that makes it impossible to solve these problems by establishing a climate in which abusive drinking seems normal," she stated during her slide presentation, *Under the Influence: The Pushing of Alcohol Via Advertising*.

Advertising encourages the abuse of alcohol by linking it with qualities that are desirable in our society, explained Ms. Kilbourne. "These tend to be the very qualities that are diminished or destroyed through its use."

Through slides of magazine ads, she showed how alcohol is paired with athletic ability, sexual potency, seduction, power, success, masculinity and fun, as well as thirst-quenching attributes.

"Alcohol is seen as a necessary part of all celebrations," but it is never mentioned that 65 per cent of the murders, 40 per cent of the assaults, and 35 per cent of the rapes in our country are associated with alcohol, or that 24 per cent of alcoholic deaths are due to violent falls, she emphasized. "You never see the hangover or unemployment statistics."

"Advertising depicts a world where daily drinking is the norm," said Kilbourne. "It does not show the other side of the coin—that 60 per cent of all psychotics have a drinking problem, the suicide rate for alcoholics is 58 times that of non-alcoholics, and that alcohol is linked to murder, unemployment, and accidents."

For pregnant women there is no warning that alcohol is dangerous to



JEAN KILBOURNE (Photo: Bonnie Seal)

the fetus, and the number of birth defects in this country has doubled since World War II, she argued.

The ad industry spends over \$900 million a year on advertising, she stated. This is over five times the budget of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

"If the money spent to advertise alcohol, tobacco, and drugs were taken away, one in every five magazines would go out of business," according to Ms. Kilbourne.

Media sell their audiences to the advertiser, Ms. Kilbourne explained. Reader and viewer demographics and psychographics tell advertisers about audience income and alcohol consumption, so they can place ads where they will be the most effective in selling the product.

"Advertisers use sophisticated production techniques that are extremely carefully planned so that

nothing is unintended." Among these are subliminal methods that appeal to readers on a subconscious level. They include powerful imagery intended to influence the consumer to buy.

By becoming aware of this imagery in ads, we can make the subconscious conscious, and maintain more control over their influence on us, she contends.

Ms. Kilbourne has been lecturing to college audiences for several years on the influence of advertising on the use of alcoholic beverages. She also does another slide show-lecture combination on sexism and the ads. She has been a writer, editor, teacher, and film-maker, and holds a doctorate in education from Boston University.

She says her intention is neither to give a tolerance lecture, nor to reform the advertising industry, but to make people aware of the influence it has over lives and culture.

Management critical in restaurant business

Grassroot News, N.W.—Dining out is one luxury everybody can afford as long as your critique is the Rustler on Union and Grand. This environment is fostered by its people-oriented owners and managers, Danny and Lorraine Brown. Danny Brown says, "We advertise directly to the family because we are an economical place. We provide a high quality dinner that's never above \$6.00 for two."

Brown's background in food services is extensive, covering the West Coast. "I started as a troubleshooter, which entailed going around to restaurants which were having problems. The first thing I did was to work as an hourly employee to find out what the problems were and where they came from."

"At this unit we had a help problem. A large turnover rate. In October of '79 I came in as an hourly employee because I wanted to be close to my people. I wanted to make sure everything was set on the assembly line so that I wouldn't ask the impossible. I could relate to what they were saying. I wanted to make the job easy for my employees. I wanted them to work smart and not hard."

Currently, Brown supervises the day and night managers, along with overseeing the entire operation. He feels his obligation is to pass on his expertise so his employees can retain skills that can be used elsewhere.

Brown solved the problem of the high turnover at the Rustler by "relating to the hourly employee's needs. If you have that dollar and cents and people treat you badly, all of a sudden that money is not that important. We had a 350 per cent turnover rate when I first got here and now it's down to 15 per cent. You just have to match combinations in people."

Brown explains his techniques. "We don't want to spend a lot of money on labor and our employees



Danny and Lorraine Brown, owners of the Rustler franchise, direct their business to the family. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

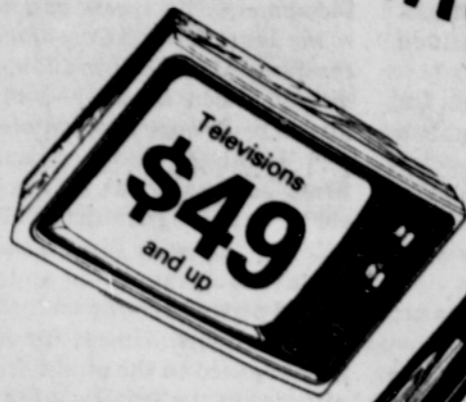
understand that it's a training experience. My advice is to Blacks who are interested in the restaurant business but in the back of their minds they may feel that for too long Black people have been in the kitchen. This will cause many to put the restaurant business down.

"Just in reading the *Observer* a couple of weeks ago, 'Black man in the kitchen,' it shows that cooking

is a gourmet job—a high prestige job. What you have to do is stick with it. And remember that it pays well. A good cook can make as high as \$30,000 a year and that's not peanuts. It's a learning in dexterity. Basketball players can benefit because they need a job to support their shoes and balls. Stick with the restaurant business. It will take care of you, if you take care of it."

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Another four area relationship to be aware of is the individual feelings derived from:

- (1) One's sense of security in private space. The Quantity and Quality of that space.
- (2) One's access to sustenance food and shelter Quantitatively and Qualitatively.
- (3) One's access to meaningful production, such as Work, Job, Business and Profession.
- (4) One's relationship to Sex, Children and Family Structures.

All four of these Dimensions are directly tied together as a whole, any one of these areas affected will automatically affect the performance in the other three.

Knowledge and understanding of these relationships is in part what Quadripartite Mental-Fitness is all about.

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