

Ferdie J. Deering

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# Alcohol's Toxic Effects Easy to Find

THE FEDERAL government has numerous agencies engaged in campaigns to control toxic substances in foods, air, soil and water.

Yet, one common "toxic substance" continues to be promoted strongly as an ingredient of social, business and political life. That "toxic substance" is alcohol as a beverage.

Like narcotics, alcoholic beverages are high profit items for those who manufacture, distribute and serve them. The virtue of free enterprise for profit may be nullified when the products sold are destructive to their users.

Our nation's capital reputedly has a higher per capita liquor consumption rate than any other city in the world.

Undoubtedly, that affects the government we get, although congressional courtesy and the Washington press corps keep stories of drinking officials pretty well "bottled up."

It is estimated that one of every 20 citizens of the United States is an alcoholic. They have lost their ability to live normal lives, hold jobs, or control their drinking.

Millions more are on their way to becoming alcoholics and others will suffer from diseases caused or aggravated by alcohol. You don't have to become an alcoholic to die from drinking.

The National Safety Council attributes about half of the automobile accident fatalities to drinking drivers. Other victims are crippled, while most drunken drivers get off with fines.

Few businessmen have escaped drinking problems caused by otherwise reliable employees who show up with hangovers or not at all.

Some parents are concerned that their children are becoming problem drinkers, but if they set examples, they will be followed.

Brewers and distillers are toying with flavored, low-alcohol drinks for children. When a St. Louis firm recently tried one in a half-dozen test markets, public protests put it down. It will be back.

Time was when athletic heroes were held up as models for young people because they didn't smoke or drink. Nowadays, athletes are paid

handsomely to encourage these vices among admirers.

Currently, a former baseball hero living in Texas appears in ads urging Oklahomans to bring back "strong beer" by voting for State Question 530 in the November 7 election. We don't need it!

The question is political in nature, dealing with setting of prices and franchises for markets. It does not deal directly with drinking and would benefit dealers, rather than the public.

Cancer researchers place considerable credence in results obtained with laboratory rats. When a scientist at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) tried giving liquor to rats, he found they formed drinking habits and acted much like people.

Individuals can avoid alcoholism by shunning places where liquor is served. Drinking habits often are developed in smoke-filled rooms with half-drunk people shouting inanities at each other. Those are "toxic substances," and should be avoided.

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November 2, 1978


Ferdie J. Deering  
The Daily Oklahoman  
500 N Broadway  
Box 25125  
Okla. City, OK 73125

Dear Mr. Deering:

Many times after reading your editorials I have wanted to write and commend you for your moral and ethical stance and forthright statements on social issues.

Your article today on the beer issue is most gratifying and encouraging to me as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am indeed grateful for people like you who have the attention and respect of the public and yet speak out so forcefully for the social and moral welfare of our state.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth Lay  
Pastor

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