



ABSTAINERS WORKING FOR A BETTER WORLD

Much of what we cover in *Monday Morning Report* has to do with the alcohol industry and those whose drinking habits support brewers, vintners and distillers, along with the impact alcohol use has on society.

From time to time, we deal with abstinence as a behavior, but in our reporting we have seldom reported on abstainers as a group and their impact on society.

In this issue our subject is the International Organization of Good Templars (IOGT) which is the world's largest organized group of nondrinkers, after the Pioneers, an Irish Catholic group known as the Total Abstinence Society of the Sacred Heart.

Often nondrinkers are known mostly for what they don't do, but IOGT members want to be known not just for their abstinent behavior, but also for what they do as "Abstainers Working for a Better World."

IOGT's roots go back more than 150 years to its beginning in upstate New York, as a part of the American temperance movement. Through its lodges, it provided social interaction for nondrinkers who wanted to avoid the negative effects of alcohol. The organization also ministered to recovering alcoholics who were in

search of new friends as they learned to live without alcohol.



Expansion resulted in establishment of chapters in Britain and the Scandinavian countries at the turn of the century and now IOGT represents a network of alcohol education, prevention and treatment programs in more than 40 nations around the world.

Here in the United States, when we think of resources to help the problem drinker or the alcoholic, Alcoholics Anonymous is usually at the top of the list. Although AA is active worldwide, in many of the European nations, particularly Italy, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, local IOGT chapters are regarded as a prime resource for ministering to alcoholics and their families.

As a representative of IOGT International, Derek Rutherford organized the Global Alcohol Policy Alliance as a network of non-government organizations working in health agencies as a counter-balance to the worldwide influence of the alcohol industry.

The GAPA operates in the EU, the USA, South America, India and Western Pacific areas.

Here in the United States IOGT members have significant public policy victories. For example IOGT's chaplain, Allen Rice, led a Michigan effort to amend the state constitution to raise the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 and Jupiter member of IOGT Reverend Michael Pflieger mounted a 14-year campaign to ban alcohol and tobacco billboards in Chicago, America's third largest city.

Vince Peterson, PhD is a former professor at Indiana University and author of the book "A Nation Under the Influence: America's Addiction to Alcohol."

As America's IOGT Director of Legislative Affairs, he has proposed a 10-point agenda for all concerned about educational and public policy issues regarding alcohol. Here are the 10 issues Dr. Peterson suggests for consideration:

The issue is:
"Alcohol and other drugs"
**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 1**

In the September-October issue of the National Good Templar (NGT), I proposed a number of policy statements that were offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

As a result of this discussion and any modifications that may come from it, the hope is that the policy will become part of the foundation of a platform for further work of the organization.

I will elaborate on each of the proposed policies in this and subsequent issues of the NGT.

Proposed Policy No. 1

It is hereby proposed that the IOGT-USA advocate that since alcohol is chemically a drug, all references that are made to the use of "alcohol and other drugs" be so described. The use of the phrase, "drugs, including alcohol" would also be acceptable.

Any use of the terms "drugs and alcohol," or "alcohol and drugs" by the media or anyone else is in error. The perpetrator should be made aware of the chemical connection between the substances and the appropriate use of the terminology.

I had been aware of this pattern of usage of "alcohol and drugs" by people in the field and had noticed it in the various media outlets, but it wasn't until I did the research on my recent book on alcohol* that I became astonished at how universal the phrase is. I came up with virtually no exceptions to it other than "drugs and alcohol," which is essentially the same phrase.

Probably the thing that really surprised me the most was the fact

that the phrase "alcohol and drugs" was the only way professional people such as addiction counselors in the field referred to the issue. Since these professionals are so indoctrinated into this speech pattern, there is little wonder why it is used as such throughout the media.

There are strong indications that this is the way the alcohol industry wants all of us to use this incorrect term. The alcohol industry has a very strong reason for the use of this seemingly harmless phrase and that is, if you talk about "alcohol and drugs" you are suggesting that there is a difference between them. And this is one illusion that the alcohol industry loves to perpetuate.

This can most dramatically be seen in the Federal Government's "War on Drugs." All of those who are working to fight the "War" cannot, by law, do anything to include alcohol in "their fight." And it doesn't take a genius to figure out who was behind this legal restriction.

Another way this type of separation manifests itself fairly regularly is when parents are confronted with some issue involving young people and drugs, and they say something like: "We're so glad that our Susie doesn't use drugs, she only drinks beer."

ACTION

Approaches that can be used to deal with this issue include:

1. Be sure that you are using the proper terminology whenever you are referring to alcohol and other drugs. And comment on this usage to friends when they might misuse the phrase.
2. Being sure that all of our Good Templar literature uses the correct terminology.
3. Be a letter writer. I have a standardized 'letter' in my computer,

to which I can quickly add the name and address of the person or news media who have misused the phrase. This letter just gently reminds them that they can be more accurate reporters if they used "alcohol and other drugs" or "drugs, including alcohol."

A sample letter would be:

Dear {add name}:

I read/heard your article/report on drugs and I noted that you referred to "alcohol and drugs." Alcohol is a drug. the use of that phrase is inappropriate. However, if you want to emphasize the use of alcohol, then it would be more accurate to say, "alcohol and other drugs" or "drugs, including alcohol."

Sincerely,

{Your Name}

If you don't use a computer, it might be helpful to have a 'master' copy, from which you could quickly write a letter to a transgressor. Since this 'error' is made repeatedly across the country, it could be that if a concerted effort were applied across the United States, it could really make a difference.

This difference could well mean that citizens may actually take a new look at the whole matter of the prevention and treatment of alcohol use, abuse, and addiction.

I hope that you will help clarify the language of alcohol usage. Please share your comments and contacts with me if you will.

My address is vpeterso@iusb.edu and my home address is 1906 Briarway, South Bend, IN 46614.

The issue is:

“What governmental agency regulates the alcohol industry?”

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 2**

No. 2 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

Question: What government agency regulates the alcohol industry in America? Is it,

- a. the Department of the Treasury
- b. the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- c. the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB)
- d. the Health and Human Services Department
- e. the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF)

Background: If you answered c, or even a, you would technically be correct. In 2002 the primary functions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) were shifted to a new bureau, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) in the Department of the Treasury.

Currently, the TTB is responsible for enforcing and administering laws covering the production, use, and distribution of alcohol and tobacco products, including the collection of alcohol and tobacco taxes. The TTB also collects excise taxes for firearms and ammunition.

Since alcohol and tobacco are products that are consumed by humans, it is noteworthy that they are the only legal drug oriented products that are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. As a result, alcohol and tobacco products are not subject to the same labeling restrictions that you find on any other

consumable items purchased in a store, including bottled water. These products do not even have to state whether or not they contain alcohol or nicotine.

Proposed Policy No. 2:

It is proposed that the regulation of all alcohol products be changed from being regulated by The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) in the Treasury Department of the U. S. Government to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a part of the Health and Human Services Department where it clearly belongs. (Bills in Congress are now in the process of moving tobacco products from the TTB to the FDA.)

Subsequent proposed policies will build on this one.

The issue is:

“What Nutritional Information Can a Consumer Receive Before Buying An Alcohol Product?”

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 3**

No. 3 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

Whenever you are in a grocery store or drug store next, stroll by the beverage section and select a few different alcohol beverages and check their labels. Look to see how the descriptions of these products compare with regard to the nutritional content and the ingredients listed on practically any other consumable product that you might purchase.

In fact, you might notice how many of these containers even mention that they contain alcohol! Or have that information obscurely stated as ‘80% Proof’ (this would be

40% alcohol).

Since alcohol is a drug (and drug stores sell great quantities of it) there should also be a list of possible negative effects of the beverage, including the fact that it may be addicting. Also there should be a list of other drugs with which it may have negative interactions. Listening to the numerous ads for medications on TV and their numerous warnings of negative interactions with alcohol, it should only be natural that all consumable alcohol beverages would also have a similar list of negative interactions available to all purchasers.

Such lists don’t exist so you don’t need to search for them.

This ‘labeling’ game gets even more interesting and strange if you look at energy drinks. It turns out now that you can buy non-alcohol energy drinks or energy drinks with alcohol. Sometimes they are even produced by the same company. The strangeness comes about when you notice that the alcohol energy drink does not have a nutritional label or ingredients list on it, while the non-alcohol beverage is required to provide these.

All of this relates back to the Proposed Policy #2 which I presented earlier in this issue of N.G.T. The major issue here deals with the fact that alcohol beverages are now regulated by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), while the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulate all other commercially produced products that you can purchase and consume.

The FDA requires all foods and drugs sold in stores to have complete lists of nutritional facts and ingredients. Drugs have also to include a list of possible side effects

and interactions with other drugs.

Proposed Policy No. 3

In order to make consumer product purchasing more accurate, safer, and intelligent it is hereby proposed that all alcohol products sold in any venue have the complete list of ingredients clearly presented along with the Food and Drug Administration label of nutritional values of all ingredients, as do all other processed consumable items.

Basically, this proposed policy seems like a ‘no-brainer,’ because it would finally have the same standards for all of our consumable products. However, it will take a lot of lobbying to achieve because our ‘very responsible’ alcohol industry will fight this idea with all their might. But that should not stop us from advocating the governmental adoption of this proposal.

It is interesting to note that, at the current time, a bill to require tobacco be subject to FDA regulations is making its way through Congress.



The issue is:

“What Drug Interaction Information and Other Warnings Can a Consumer Receive When Buying An Alcohol Product?”

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 4**

No. 4 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that were offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

Since alcohol is a legal drug for persons who are 21 years of age or older, there should be a strict requirement that it be subject to the

rules and regulations of the Food and Drug Administration.

There should be warnings of possible negative outcomes related to the use of the substance including the possibility of lifelong addiction. This policy would be combined with Policy 2 and 3 requiring that alcohol fall under the Food and Drug Administration domain and thereby would be subject to all of the rules and regulations therein.

The average person watching television during the evening may encounter several prescription type advertisements which suggest that you should see your doctor “ if (this medicine) is right for you,” and then they very quickly recite a list of warnings which often include limitations on the consumption of alcohol while using this medicine.

What is missing here is that there should be an equivalent list of warnings attached to every alcohol purchase so that a user will not unknowingly take two incompatible drugs and possibly suffer major problems. With all of the possible negative interactions with alcohol and other drugs, it is a wonder that that there aren’t more legal cases in court. Perhaps the alcohol industry possibly has a ‘secret’ fund set aside for such cases so that they can be settled outside of court quickly and not experience publicity or exposure in court.

Also, there is always the possible danger of becoming addicted to alcohol (alcohol addiction or alcoholism). It has been estimated that in the USA there may at least 20 to 25 million people who are addicted to alcohol, yet there is no warning placed on this drug which is freely sold across the country.

This addiction is particularly

troubling since there is no ‘cure;’ one can only learn to stop with the help of groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. And even then not all addicts stay abstinent. In any event, since one is never cured of alcohol addiction there are quite likely even more addicts out there than previously estimated.

Proposed Policy No. 4

With all of this potential and real damage created by the legal sale of alcohol to adults over 21, it is hereby proposed that alcohol, being a legal drug for adults, be subject to all of the rules and regulations applied to other legal drugs; e.g., the purchaser is furnished a complete list of warnings of possible negative interactions and outcomes with other drugs, and include the possible danger of alcohol addiction.



The issue is: *“How much alcohol can you consume as a driver before endangering yourself and others”*

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 5**

No. 5 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

Before major holidays such as Christmas and New Year’s Day we are constantly bombarded by alcohol commercials that encourage us to drink responsibly before driving. Yet the same alcohol beverage companies were the greatest foes of lowering the blood alcohol content (BAC) of automobile drivers to even the rate of .08, which is currently the standard.

Even though the current .08 is down from the previous standard of

.10, the amount of traffic deaths associated with alcohol use has not lessened significantly. In fact, for the last ten years, the number of traffic deaths due to alcohol has remained rather steady at more than 16,000 a year (over 39% of all traffic fatalities per year in that same period). The saddest comment about these cases is that they were all preventable deaths.

In comparison, the standard used in most of Europe is .05 BAC and the legal limit in Sweden is .02. The Swedes essentially do not tolerate any driving under the influence of alcohol, and they have acted accordingly.

Even the various states have placed more severe restrictions on commercial truck drivers and professional pilots. In both cases the BAC limit is .04. And, since it is against the law for under aged individuals to drink, all 50 of the states have passed Zero Tolerance Laws, which means that any under aged driver with any alcohol in his or her system is subject to arrest.

Foreign countries and our own states have established the precedent of legislating reduced or no blood alcohol content in our truck drivers, pilots and our youth. If we really desire to reduce the high, preventable death toll due to alcohol consumption and driving, it only follows that we reduce the number of alcohol-impaired drivers by lowering the legal amount of blood alcohol content to at least .05.

Therefore we advocate that the alcohol intoxication limits for driving be reduced to .05 as it is in most European countries.

The issue is: *“What does responsible drinking mean?”*

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 6**

No. 6 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

The alcohol industry, in a valiant attempt to be “responsible” promoters of what even they suggest could be a dangerous drug, is actively using the message that users of its products should do so ‘responsibly’ (“party responsibly”). Yet the industry in no case spells out just what drinking or partying responsibly really means.

If you ask those who are drinking –and it sometimes doesn’t matter how much they have consumed –they invariably will tell you that they are drinking responsibly and somehow they will know when to quit. Now, one of the direct results of drinking is that alcohol affects the part of the brain that controls judgment, so this essentially becomes a non-argument.

Does drinking responsibly mean, drink as much as you can, just as long as you have a ‘designated driver’ whom you hope has not consumed any alcohol, to take you home? Or does it mean that you should drink only until you have had ‘enough’? And then, what constitutes ‘enough’? Is drinking in moderation what the alcohol industry means by ‘responsible’ drinking? The federal government has a definition of what it considers ‘moderate’ drinking to be: Moderate drinking is one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

As it stands now, the industry appears to be having the best of all possibilities: Ardently telling its consumers to ‘be responsible’ while

not defining the message. And then placing the blame on the drinker if he gets in trouble legally because he or she did not know ‘when to say when.’

We believe that this is too important an issue to be left so vague.

Therefore, we advocate that The alcohol industry spell out in its advertising and other promotional literature, exactly what it means by “responsible drinking,” and it include this statement on all of its advertising and beverage containers.

The issue is: *“Why do alcohol companies advertise on sporting events which feature underage youth?”*

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 7**

No. 7 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that were offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

There is a major problem dealing with the alcohol industry having virtually an open market on advertising to all of our citizens, whereas another legal drug (nicotine) has severe restrictions as to where products containing nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, etc.) can be advertised. This is most notable in alcohol advertising and promotion dealing with under aged youth.

And while we believe that there are many concerns here, there is a major issue that should be dealt with immediately. This involves the alcohol industry’s use of underage students as key instruments to help market its products. This would apply, for example, to any alcohol industry

promotion of a college sporting event where the participants of the game are, for the most part, under 21 years of age.

The alcohol industry has long maintained that it does not market any of its products to the underage population. However, this practice of sponsoring college sports clearly illustrates one approach on not only how they do so, but demonstrates how they are able to 'use' the under aged participants as unpaid 'promoters' of their products in the process.

We, therefore, advocate that a ban on alcohol sponsorship, including alcohol product advertising, be enacted in all athletic and other events where the participants are primarily people under the age of 21. This would include all college and university sports.

The issue is: "*How do parents, educators and the general community learn about our increasing knowledge of how alcohol affects human development?*"

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 8**

No. 8 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

For many years now, the federal government has required that all alcoholic beverages have a warning labels which among other things, includes the statement that pregnant women should not consume alcohol while they are pregnant. It happens that women who do drink before and while pregnant can give birth to seriously under developed children;

children who usually end up with having Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE).

In either case, there is a substantial void of intellectual mental abilities in the child as well as some development of bodily features, including facial abnormalities. All of these undeveloped features tend to be lifelong characteristics, which unfortunately places a great burden on parents, schools, and the communities who have to help and maintain these children.

What is less well known is the fact that alcohol use can continue to affect child development through the child's growing years -up to about 25 years of age -or when the person's brain stops developing.

Some parents have been known to give toddlers sips of alcohol, perhaps because it is a sedative and would help the child become sleepy. Now, there are numerous reports of children as young as 9 years old who are regularly drinking alcohol -usually at home but also at other people's houses. And this pattern continues in many communities until the age of 20 -which is quite a statement since any consumption of alcohol by people under the age of 21 is illegal in all states.

The effects of alcohol on brain development is fast becoming known by scientists and other experts but this information is not finding its way to the general public very quickly at all.

One example is that alcohol consumption in general can lead to alcohol addiction (alcoholism) in some people, however, it usually doesn't manifest itself as such until a drinker who began drinking at about the age of 21 continues a routine of drinking for about 18 to 15 years. Nowadays, however, the experts state

that if the child begins drinking before age 15 s/he is 4 times as likely to become an alcoholic than a person who waits until he or she is 21. A little known feature of many high schools in America these days is the special group sessions that are similar to AA meetings and are held each week to help some of the estimated 4 million teenage alcoholics in the USA.

Additional studies of brain development are finding that the most important part of the brain -the part that is supposed to foster rational thinking, good judgment, and sound reasoning abilities isn't really fully developed until the individual is 20 -25 years of age. So while many teens are currently strongly agitating for the drinking age to be lowered, the developmental data as well as driving statistics suggests otherwise. In fact, in many states now it is harder to get a drivers license at as early an age as it had been formerly.

This type of information has to be better disseminated to our general public, and especially to expectant parents, those who plan to have children and all of those who are concerned about the lives of our young people.

Therefore, it is advocated that: A major emphasis on young people's health and physical development be made to inform young people, parents, and others of the effects of alcohol on the youth's behavior, brain development, and other potential disorders of alcohol, including addiction (alcoholism).

This could be done by the development and distribution of educational materials for all ages; by the sponsorship of special conferences/seminars on alcohol impact on the young; and by encouraging regular features along

these lines in the regular press.

At one time, all states had a mandatory class on alcohol as part of the regular curriculum. We should work toward achieving that objective again.

The issue is: *“Why do we tolerate the almost meaningless penalties that are given to drunk drivers who kill?”*

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 9**

No. 9 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.

One of the unique features of our legal system is the very different and hard to explain prison sentences that can be given to people for committing somewhat similar crimes.

For example, a person can get three years in prison for having a gram or two of marijuana in his/her possession, yet a teenager may be arrested, but rarely given a prison sentence, for possession of alcohol, which is also an illegal act.

And then another person can get 4 years in prison for choosing to drink, then choosing to drive while under the influence of alcohol (DUI) and killing someone. In many states, the driver would get a prison term of about 4 years, with time off for good behavior, while murder may result in a far greater sentence.

Many other examples of the irrationality of comparative prison sentences and other penalties can be given, but none seems so glaring as the extremely small sentences given to drunk drivers whether they kill someone or not.

Americans have for years decried the drunk driver, yet we really do

nothing about it. Alcohol companies do talk about having a designated driver if you drink and we have advertising campaigns against drinking and driving around the holidays and during prom and graduation time in the spring. However, the number of people who are killed by drunken drivers each year has remained at roughly the same number for about the last 10 years.

If we really care about our fellow citizens and their welfare, we should not tolerate this type of behavior at all.

Methods for ending this killing behavior could include lowering the legal blood alcohol content (BAC). We could lower the legal BAC of drivers (see Policy #5), tighten the consequences for violating the laws, bring about more severe penalties for drinking and driving at all, and making a murder of an innocent person by a person who is DUI a major crime subject to the most severe penalties. Further, these laws and sentences should be fully enforced.

Therefore, it is advocated that: Penalties given by courts for death caused by alcohol intoxicated drivers need to be more severe and enforced accordingly.

The issue is: *“Can we minimize the negative effects that alcohol plays in the college life of our children?”*

**PROPOSED IOGT
POLICY No. 10**

(No. 10 in a series of 10 proposed policy statements that are offered as a basis for discussion and action on the part of Good Templars across America.)

A strange phenomenon has occurred related to our emphasis on

having almost all children pursue a college education. It seems as if at the same time as this major push for higher education is occurring, the social climate at various colleges and universities also has undergone a major change.

This change seems to be less in the area of gains in book learning, but rather in ‘learning how to party.’ Colleges may have the majority of their classes offered between Tuesday and Thursday, freeing up 4 days for partying each week. Campus bars may have ‘Ladies Night’ where ladies can obtain drinks free or at a very low cost which generally works to bring a large number of male drinkers into the bars as well.

On college campuses we can find probably the greatest number of binge drinkers-those who consume 5 or more drinks at a time (4 or more if they are female). As a result of such behavior, there often is a ‘second-hand effect’ of drinking related to neighborhoods often being trashed, say after a team victory or loss, unwanted sexual contacts, and driving while intoxicated to mention just a few.

A major concern of many college administrations is whether or not their students who reach the age of 21 will be coaxed by his/her peers to drink 21 shots of whiskey to celebrate the occasion -and die in the process.

It is a very sad but true fact that each year about 1,500 of our nation’s college students (our best and brightest) die every year from alcohol related accidents.

Therefore, it is advocated that: Strengthened measures be instituted by colleges, college towns, and the parents of the students to severely reduce this number of abuses, accidents, and deaths caused by alcohol, with zero tolerance being an ultimate goal.