

Students Against Drunk Drivers

By Carl Grier
Post Staff Writer

Did you know that almost 60 percent of fatally injured teenage drivers had alcohol in their blood system prior to their crash, with 33 percent at legally intoxicating levels? Fourteen teenagers die each day in alcohol related crashes. An additional 300 teenagers are injured each day in alcohol related crashes. Alcohol involvement in fatal teenage collisions is at least three times greater at night (8 p.m. to 4 a.m.) than it is during the day (4 a.m. to 8 p.m.). The Surgeon General has reported that life expectancy has improved in the U.S. over the past 75 years for every age group except the 15-24 year-old American, whose death rate is higher today than it was 20 years ago. The leading cause of death for this group is drunk driving.

Because of these statistics, SADD (Students Against Drunk Drivers), which has meaning to over 150,000 high school students in over 100 schools in Massachusetts, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Utah, Iowa, California, New Jersey and New York, was organized in September, 1981, after a mandatory health education program for sophomores at Wayland High School, 20 miles west of Boston, which has 1,000 students enrolled. The program was developed and conducted by Robert Anastas.

Anastas, Director of Health Education for the Wayland Public School System and lecturer at seminars and World Congresses on drug and alcohol abuse, and Carl Olson, a sophomore student who became chairman of SADD, organized it to help save their own lives and the lives of others; educate students concerning the problems of drinking and driving; develop peer counseling among students about alcohol use; and increase public awareness and prevention of this problem everywhere. They designed the SADD button, using the school colors of orange and black, and invited juniors and seniors in the same school to join the organization.

SADD Day at Wayland was April 15, 1982, and Governor Edward King of Massachusetts was made honorary chairman. Students signed pledges which stated "We, the undersigned, believe in the SADD goal to eliminate the drunk driver and save lives and pledge not to drink and drive, or let a friend drink and drive. IF WE CAN DREAM IT - IT CAN BE DONE."

Billy Sells, 17, and Jon Gouge, 16, believe in the above pledge, and because they do, Sells founded SADD in Charlotte on March 26, 1983. Gouge joined soon after the death of a 14 year-old friend of the Independence High School students caused by a drunk driver prompted them to become involved. Both had to complete a 15-day session about the dangers of al-



Billy Sells, left, and Jon Gouge have found SADD to be very rewarding. Both are confident that peer pressure causes students to drink to the point that it becomes addictive.

cohol and how it affects you before becoming eligible for membership.

They have found SADD to be very rewarding. "It's rewarding to become that peer counselor, save one life and get across to one friend that it's not safe to drink and drive," remarked Sells. "We all experience peer pressure, but kids and their peers can talk to each other better. I feel that if we can get one drunk driver off the road, that's one less person destroyed and we've accomplished something," confirmed Gouge.

The students voiced that they try not to associate with MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) because, "They're trying to change laws against drunk drivers. We just want to make the public aware of the fact that it's not right to drink and drive."

Both are confident that peer pressure causes students or young people to drink to the point that it becomes addictive. "When kids turn 16, the first thing they want to do is get in a car and drive. When they get drunk and try to drive, we can help them by calling a cop or a taxi cab," suggested Sells. Gouge added, "We could have one person whose sober drive for them." The "Contract for Life," established by SADD, is an even better solution. It states that if a student is ever drunk at a party or in a situation in which he or she can't drive, he or she can call the parent(s) to be picked up at any time with no questions asked at that particular time. Parents or a parent who is in the above situation can also call the student to be picked up at

anytime with no questions asked at that particular time.

Several reasons have kept the SADD members from drinking and driving. Sells began, "My religious belief keeps me from drinking and driving. I really wasn't aware that 20 people are killed a day by drunk drivers until I got involved in SADD. This has really shown me the dangers of drinking and driving." Gouge continued, "I saw a lot of facts in SADD which really interested me. I'm very athletic (tight end on the football team), and I don't like the thought of my body being out of control."

They revealed that SADD's \$1,000 budget consists of money received from beer companies such as Budweiser and Michelob and that the new law about drunk driving has been an influence as to how much people drink and drive now.

Billy Sells, an only child, is the son of Bill and Pearlina Sells. Jon Gouge, brother of Mrs. Cindy Earnhardt, 20, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Walker. If you want more facts about SADD or are interested in becoming a member, contact Billy Sells at 536-1672 or Becky Sink at 536-8025.

Martin Disturbed By Tenants' Plight

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children to include an obligation to pay for all the programs we wanted but would not pay for."

He added, "A \$200 billion deficit this year creates an automatic \$20 billion increase in the budget for next year just to pay the interest on the increased debt."

Martin, who has worked on several occasions in Washington, stressed he has human relations experience as well as political experience. He said he believes in representing everyone, not just work-force groups or political action committees (PACs). Claiming he has the highest campaign budget over Susan Green and Ben Tison, Martin expressed

his success in fundraising can be attributed to his individual appeals rather than his reliance on money from organizations which have endorsed him.

The former board member of the McCrorey YMCA and a member of United Way's Human Services Planning Board stated he has a special interest in minorities and in the poor. He has worked in several programs designed to better public housing in Charlotte.

He also accepts many clients who own small businesses and encourages more minorities to look into the opportunities of ownership. In his campaign speech, Martin stated, "With experience in a small church in a poor neighborhood, I appreciate our legacy of a commitment to develop meaningful opportunities for all people to participate fully in our great system."

Since the ninth district is

comprised of Mecklenburg, Iredell, Lincoln and parts of Yadkin Counties, D. G. informed he has a lot of territory in which to familiarize his name. He has various daily activities scheduled in all the counties for the nearly 75 days left before the primary election.

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