



Photo By Tom McIntyre

## Booze Was Killing Him, Then Came AA

By TOM MCINTYRE  
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When David A. Rae died a few months ago it could be said he was well-known in Kings Mountain for a transplanted citizen.

He was a funny little Scotsman who had the ability to wear you out talking to you. The words in his reedy-thin voice were completely indistinguishable at times when he fell back on the Scottish brogue.

But he made a great deal of sense in the one subject that apparently consumed him.

"I am an alcoholic," he would say. "And I will be one until the day I die even though I have not had a drink since 1942."

And the things he had to say were important to many families and family friends in Kings Mountain.

"Most people would be shocked to learn that more than 200 deaths in this community over the past couple of years were due to alcohol and not to natural causes," he would say. "These deaths I am talking about were not due to fires, car accidents or some of the other causes usually listed. These people simply drank themselves to death."

Perhaps these people were addicted to the booze, the way you become addicted to cigarettes or drugs, he was told.

"It is an addiction," he said, "but you might be surprised at what the alcoholic is addicted to. It's the taste of alcohol. It was a surprise to me, too, but it's true."

How in the world can anyone become addicted to the taste of something that burns the throat and stomach lining, makes breathing difficult and many times causes you to vomit with violent spasms?

He said to the alcoholic the taste becomes as sweet as chocolate candy to the chocolate freak.

"Alcoholism is a sickness," he said. "A true sickness. And you would be surprised at the number of very sick people we have living right here in Kings Mountain."

Rae knew what he was talking about because for several years he worked directly with these people through a local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. Rae said he and his co-workers were not always successful in their bid to help an alcoholic help himself to recovery.

"I know exactly what they go through," he said. "I have heard all of the arguments and reasons for not wanting to give up drinking. I used the same arguments myself, just as every other alcoholic who ever lived has used them. These are not reasons, but symptoms of the illness."

So, David Rae's story was the same as the others. The same as the stories he heard from local people he helped through AA.

David Rae was an engineer and his work carried him all over the world. But his drinking began before that when he was drafted into the military. He confided he was a rip-roaring drunk when he was 18 or 19 years old. He spent 46 years of life drinking and working until drinking became the number one goal.

"I was dying because my need to drink," he said. "It was an obsession of the mind coupled with the body. When I was 46 I could no longer handle a job. I was weak, unable to support my family."

"I had been in many places, hospitals and clinics," he said. "Those places can't help you. You either end up in hospitals or jails. I have a mental picture of coming to wakefulness in these places all over the country. I have vivid memories of the LTs that developed in the hospitals because of no access to alcohol I have seen these horrible hallucinations in myself and from others. Even now, after so many years, it is still not possible for me to erase these memories."

Rae said his comments were not intended to entertain but to let the people in this city know that there can be recovery from alcoholism.

The beginning of the end of boozing for David Rae came on January 2, 1942, in New York City. He was so drunk he stepped in front of a truck and knocked to the pavement. He still managed somehow to get to the home of a friend of his, a man who worked for the same company as he. The friend dressed his banged-up head and took him home about 4 a. m. that morning. On January 9, 1942, Rae was recovered enough to get out of bed. His first thoughts were not of his injuries, not of the friend who had cared for him. His first and only thought was to get a drink.

"I must have a drink. I must!" Rae said. "That was the only thought I had. It is a compulsion no one understands but the alcoholic. I was in my robe as I rushed out of the house. On the porch I collided with a man and we fell into the rose bushes. The man's name was Gordon Mac. He said I have some good news and you can't drink it! This man became my sponsor in AA."

Rae said a woman, a recovered alcoholic, had sent Gordon to see me. Gordon stayed with me. He went walking with me. He talked. Still I was determined to get a drink. I told him this from my heart," Rae said. "He told me, 'Scottie, you are an alcoholic.' I asked what was that and he said it's a man who doesn't come back."

Rae said that AA is not a magic cure-all for alcoholics. The will to stop drinking has to come from the individual and it is ultimately up to the individual in the final analysis. However, he said, family and friends play an important role in aiding the alcoholic recover. This is where such organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon come in helpfully.

"No one starts out to be an alcoholic," Rae said. "It happens through constant imbibing. It comes through losing control."

Rae always had a sense of humor about funny things that happens when a person is intoxicated, but he never allowed anyone to think he felt it was the smart thing to do. On the contrary, he felt it was an illness that had to be dealt with. And that's what he tried to do for over 30 years in New York and finally in Kings Mountain.

Rae said the public alcoholic, who either gets into fights or puts on a comic show, is in essence pleading for some kind of help. The quiet drinker also shows signs that are requests for help. "Of course the moment you try to help out come all the arguments. The alcoholic feels there is a world-wide conspiracy against him or her. In some cases the alcoholic has no desire to be helped and these are the ones who run you ragged."

Rae said the family and friends of an alcoholic do nothing to help when they disregard the drinking or abet it by covering up and hiding the fact from others. He said these people are only fooling themselves because you cannot hide the fact you have a drinker in the family, unless that person never leaves his or her room and even then it is impossible to hide it forever.

"The family of an alcoholic needs guidance and help in dealing with the situation," Rae said. "AA can provide information. A family doctor can usually point you in the right direction to finding where a helpful AA agency is located."

## Arson Is Suspected In Residence Blaze

Arson is suspected in a fire Tuesday night at the residence of Mrs. Ann Crum at 805 Floyd St.

Cleveland County Fire Marshal Delane Davis and Kings Mountain Police Department are investigating the incident.

Davis said that neighbors reported the house fire which extensively damaged a bedroom while the occupants of the house were away. Evidence of criminally deliberate setting of the fire was found on the scene, Davis said. A flammable liquid had been poured in a bedroom closet, across the floor and in other areas of the burning house.

In other fire reports, Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department put out a fire in a trash container in Midpines at 9:17 p. m. Wednesday.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1977

Monday In Kings Mountain

## Snowfall Creates Havoc



Photo By Gary Stewart

**THREE HURT IN HEAD-ON CRASH** - Three Kings Mountain people were hurt in a grinding two-car head-on crash on ice-slick Grover Rd. Monday morning. Police said drivers of the two cars were Scenetta Falls

and Waddell Chambers. Mrs. Chambers was also injured in the crash. Kings Mountain Police Department had answered 14 wreck calls during a period of 90 minutes.

Kings Mountain citizens slipped and slid yesterday during a first snowfall of New Year 1977 which transformed the roads into an icy glaze.

The first winter's snow started falling shortly before 7:30 and during a period of 90 minutes the Kings Mountain Police Department had already answered a total of 14 wreck calls in the area.

At least three people were injured in the wrecks, which also included a report that one school bus carrying children home from school had left the highway on Waco Rd.

Schools were dismissed shortly after they opened for the day much to the delight of the kids who could hardly wait to get outside and romp and play in the white stuff.

Their parents were having a harder time, however, navigating the driving conditions.

City garbage collection was called off early Monday morning after a collection vehicle reportedly went into the ditch near West Gate Shopping Center. Collection will not be resumed, according to Mayor John Moss, until the roads are safe.

City public works crews were dispatched about mid-morning to spread sand over the streets. The city was divided into quarters and worked one quarter at a time. This included state roads and bridges. Scraping operations were also on the schedule as soon as enough snow accumulated.

The police, on the tail of all of the accidents reported, were pleading with motorists to slow down.

District Court Judge Berlin Carpenter, traveling west to Shelby on U. S. 74 for district court today, became a stranded motorist on Shelby Rd. near TG&Y about 8:30 and a police officer was summoned for help.

One fireman, Larry Smith, slipped and twisted his ankle in a house fire Monday morning at 7:30 a. m. at the corner of Phifer Rd. and Scotland Dr. City firemen said the fire, which apparently started in the furnace room, had already "broke through the roof" when they arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Gene Tatum, who own the home and had just moved in the new residence on Christmas Eve, escaped injury. According to early reports, Mr. Tatum was shaving and the "lighting began to flicker on and off." Mr. Tatum is employed by Blazer Construction Co. Damages were estimated at \$30,000 to the residence which had not been constructed completely at the time of the fire.

Scenetta Falls, Waddell and Edith Chambers were all injured in a grinding two-car head-on crash on N. C. 216 in front of Timms Furniture. According to police reports, one of the injured had teeth "knocked out" and Scenetta Falls was admitted to the hospital. KM Hospital Emergency nurses reported that Roy Hollifield was also admitted after a wreck on ice-slick roads.

## PO Back To Normal

Things are back to normal at the Kings Mountain Post Office after what Postmaster Charles Alexander termed a "normal" Christmas rush.

"We kept fairly busy," Alexander said of the Christmas mailing season, "and now we're going into a slack period which is normal this time of year."

Alexander said the Christmas mailing was as heavy as usual and possibly heavier because of the recent United Parcel Service strike.

"We certainly saw a decrease in our business when the UPS strike ended," said the veteran KM Postmaster. "But there's no way we can tell how the UPS strike affected the mailing because the strike ended during the Christmas rush season."

"There wasn't too much difference between this Christmas and last Christmas," he continued. "This year people started mailing 10 days earlier due to the UPS strike, so the mailing was spread out for 10 more days."

"When I came here 20 years ago," he recalled, "everybody waited until the last week to mail Christmas cards. We were kept quite busy at that time. But there aren't as many people mailing cards as there were back then."

Alexander said the post office didn't add on any help during the rush season but worked its own

employees on an overtime basis. "We couldn't tell whether our Christmas business was heavier

because of the UPS strike or not," he added. "But we do know we had parcels running out our ears."

## Tax Listing Underway

County tax listing began Monday and continues through January 31, according to Township Four Tax Lister Edwin Moore.

The tax listers, Moore, Mrs. Charles Ballard and Mrs. Jack Hauser are on duty weekdays from 8:30 a. m. until 5 p. m.

Moore said the books will be set up in Grover on Sat., Jan. 8 and 22 from 8:30 a. m. until 1 p. m. and in Kings

Mountain, Sat., Jan. 15 and 29 at the same times.

"We have been fairly busy so far," Moore said, "but this is normal. The first and last weeks of tax listing each year are usually our busiest times. With this in mind we would like to urge citizens in Number Four Township to come in all through the month of January and not wait until the deadline."

Moore also reminds citizens who are disabled and over 65 years of age they are entitled to a \$5,000 value exemption if their income annually does not exceed \$7,500. Moore has forms for these persons to fill out and file with him by January 31 or with the Shelby Tax office not later than February 15. Moore said this form must be filled out each year at listing time in order for disabled and the over 65 group to qualify for their exemption.

Persons wishing to list by mail should call the Shelby Tax office for a mailout form.

Tax bills will be issued in August and are payable, without penalty, by December 31, 1977.

## COPE Meet Friday

COPE will hold its regular meeting Fri., Jan. 7 at 7 p. m. at city hall.

This is a very important meeting to discuss changes within the organization and all members are urged to attend.

One project COPE has been asked to take on is raising \$350 to purchase a film entitled the "Pulse Of Life," to be used in the community-wide Cardipulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) program slated to get underway this month.