



# MICAP RECAP

*Volume 112, Number 2 - April 2017*

A Publication of the Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems,  
an entity of the American Alcohol and Drug Information Foundation.

*Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems  
Celebrating its 112<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017*

## **WHY I SERVE ON THE MICAP BOARD! HOW MIGHT YOU BEST SERVE MICAP?**

**By Rev. W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, Treasurer,  
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I do not believe it is evil to drink a glass of beverage alcohol (B/A). Then, again, B/A is evil when it gets its claws into you and your judgment and health is affected by its presence in your life. So, I'm not a prohibitionist, and MICAP is not a prohibitionist organization; it's a temperance organization.

While I, myself, have not been caught by the B/A Lion, two of my family members have not been as lucky as me. My brother, 2.5 years younger than me, died of cancer in 1997 at age 55. Previous to his death, he was treated for cancer of the jaw and cancer of the lungs, both probably caused by his addiction to tobacco plus his alcoholism. I calculate that if he lived to age 80 (not unreasonable in our day), he was robbed of nearly one-third of his natural life expectancy. And this doesn't include the loss to his brothers and sister and our families, nor to his children and grandchildren. And while I know that he was responsible for his addictive behaviors, I am also acutely aware that those who make and package and sell harmful products bear some responsibility for his shortened life.

I never met the other family member. He was my wife's father. He was a Deputy Sheriff in Minnesota and he died of a gunshot wound by an inebriated neighbor. That neighbor served 20 years in prison in Minnesota, was released, and has subsequently died. But 20 years of his life was spent locked up in prison. My wife and her two brothers were also deprived of their father. Our children and her brothers' children were also deprived of a grandfather they would never know. The human cost of alcoholism is absolutely astounding and, like the financial aspects of our addictive behaviors, it impacts all of us.

I don't volunteer for MICAP to run an AA group, as good as those groups are. Neither do I do counseling with persons ad-

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dicted to alcohol. I don't have that expertise, and there are many other places which work with addicted individuals and groups more effectively than I. MICAP, however, is a 501(c)(3) organization which works to impact the Michigan legislature and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. We attempt to encourage lawmakers and the MLCC to enact BETTER public laws and policies which will benefit our Michigan citizenry. Through the years, we have succeeded in nudging the legislature and MLCC to:

- Adopt the Quota Law which limits on-premise licensing to 1 per 1500 population.
- Adopt the 500 Foot Law which denies liquor licenses closer than 500 feet from schools and churches.
- Squelch legislation that would have absolved licensees from liability for serving drunken persons.
- Create the Office of Substance Abuse Services (OSAS) in Michigan.
- Urge the state legislature to tighten Michigan's drunk driving laws by lowering the legal blood alcohol levels first from 0.15% to 0.10%, and then from 0.10% to 0.08%.
- Create policy which deleted high-alcohol-content Alco-Pops in Michigan.
- Squelch legislation which would have extended bar hours from 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. at least three times in the past 10 years.

Besides the nudging of the legislature and Michigan Liquor Control Commission, MICAP has taken on some issues of its own. Those include:

- Helping to get the Bottle Bill passed which charges a dime per bottle/can of pop, beer and other beverages and keeps them from the landfills, or from littering our parks, highways and other public places.
- Having MICAP run a successful grass-roots campaign to return the drinking age back to 21. Michigan, through MICAP's auspices, was the first state in the nation to raise it. Now, with the help of the National Highway Transportation Act, all 50 states have returned to a majority age of 21 for drinking B/A.
- Having MICAP take on the publication of the Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education (JADE), a 96-page peer-reviewed journal with articles cited by leading research centers on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs regularly. It is printed 3 times per year.

Because of the continued personal and financial cost to the families, citizens, and State of Michigan, a present goal is to raise the tax on a bottle/can/glass (b/c/g) of beer 5 cents. The present tax on a b/c/g was reduced in 1966 and has not been raised since. Its value has also eroded 86% since then by inflation. There are at least three (3) good reasons to enact such legislation, including:

1. Research shows that even a few pennies increase in cost for a b/c/g of beer cuts total personal use.

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2. Having Michigan governmental agencies that deal with the fall-out of harmful drinking, receive funds which would enable them to carry out their purposes.
3. Tying the 5-cent proposal to inflation, we would save the Michigan legislature weeks and months of work trying to figure out how to fund these agencies. Of course, the monies would be dedicated to this work.

The upshot from all of this? I gladly volunteer my time to the Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems. And as MICAP succeeds with each new goal, I get a sense of satisfaction for having used my gifts to the glory of God and to helping Michigan be a better place in which to live, work and play.

Care to join me? Care to help MICAP succeed in its next goal? Call me at 517.323.2445 and we'll arrange a mutually convenient time and place to talk about how you, personally, can best help us. Thank you for listening. I really hope to hear from some of you.

Bill Amundsen

## **UNITE TO FACE ADDICTION MICHIGAN 2nd ANNUAL RALLY & ADVOCACY DAY MAY 18, 2017 - 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MICHIGAN STATE CAPITOL STEPS & GROUNDS**

UFAM (Unite to Face Addiction Michigan) is dedicated to unifying the voices of millions of Michigan citizens impacted by substance abuse and other disorders. It is a non-profit organization working to change the way addiction is perceived and treated in our state. Their mission is to create strength in unity to eliminate stigma, improve access to treatment, support prevention and promote recovery through advocacy, education and outreach.

The UFAM Rally strives to meet this mission by providing national and local speakers and performers. Some lawmakers will be in attendance in the "Legislative Bullpen". There will be over fifty resource tables (including authors and artists) and a holistic tent which will include information on Yoga, acupuncture, Reiki therapy and more.

You may register as a FREE participant, donor and/or sponsor at: [ufamichigan.org/2017-rally](http://ufamichigan.org/2017-rally). Also at this site, you can see who the many speakers, performers and artists are who will be at the rally.



# **MICAP/AADIF**

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## **A Donation to MICAP Would be Wonderful**

MICAP is a small non-profit organization with a mission to provide information about the consequences of alcohol abuse, and to promote public policies that address these issues. It is a big task, and we are committed to doing our part.

For this work, MICAP depends 100% on gifts from people like you. Our work year-round depends directly on these gifts. MICAP could not do its work without your financial support, which truly makes a difference in this important work.

MICAP is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your gift to MICAP is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the tax code. Please use the enclosed envelope, or send your check to: MICAP, P.O. Box 10212, Lansing, MI 48901. From the bottom of our heart, we thank you.