

Other Voices—

The Value of Fairbanks Detoxification Center

The Fairbanks Detoxification Center has been the subject of considerable controversy recently. Some cite the cost of operation, others the futility of sobering up drunks so they can go out and start all over again, and others just consider the whole program a waste of time, effort and money. I for one disagree with this theory completely. I consider the Fairbanks Detoxification center one of the most important and vital social services serving not only the residents of Fairbanks, but the residents of all of Alaska.

Drinking is apparently a part of the way of life in Fairbanks if not all Alaska, unfortunately the less affluent are by their circumstances coerced into drinking in public establishments, while the more affluent can imbibe in the privacy of their homes, either alone or with friends without fear of public ridicule or incarceration. But, what about the visitors to our city from the outlying villages and neighboring cities? It's human nature that they want to socialize, meet their friends and in general enjoy their stay here; where else are they going to meet but in a bar? Naturally some of them overindulge.

My purpose is not to discuss the private or public drinking habits of anyone, but to bring to your attention the one organization in Fairbanks that is taking positive action to help those people who for some reason, real or imagined, cannot help themselves.

The organization is the Fairbanks Detoxification Center, located on Airport Road at what was formerly the North Slope Lodge.

Anyone who needs professional help is welcome there with no "Red Tape" and a minimum of interrogation. The main interest of the professional staff headed by Dr. David Cannack and his competent staff of Registered Nurses and several non-professional assistants, is to get the patient sober, coherent and in a condition to return to the community as a useful and productive citizen.

The mere fact that some citizens who were considered to be incurable alcoholics were treated at this clinic and returned to society as useful and productive citizens is justification for the support of the state, the city, the BIA, the ANF, the UGN, the Liquor Dealers Ass'n, the Bar Owners Ass'n, and every church and civic group as well as private citizens.

Richard R. Grunder
1101 Noble St.
Fairbanks, Alaska