



# Walt Evans

## Dial-A-Bottle was filled with red ink

**BOTTLE TIMES:** Dreams die hard if you really believe in them. In fact, Eva Page is here to tell you that dreams don't die at all.

Couple of months ago, Ms. Page might not have said that. She looked at **Dial-A-Bottle**, the program she started to help people with drinking problems and families of those with drinking problems and saw nothing but bottles of red ink.

In fact, if you dial A-Bottle right now, you will get a recording that says you can't be helped. And that's something that upsets Eva no end.

"We've been temporarily closed since March 18 of this year," she said, "but things are looking up. Clayton Peterson (who raised some \$15 million for Children's Orthopedic Hospital's Stride program) has offered his help."

Eva, in announcing that, came as close as I've ever seen to what is referred to as people "bubbling." She could hardly contain herself, and no wonder.



Eva Page

She started Dial-A-Bottle on September 2, 1974, a concept she developed after her husband died from alcoholism. Like many people who work in the field, she has first-hand knowledge of the destructive forces of alcohol abuse. That brought her into the field, but something else kept her in it.

"I found working with alcoholics to be challenging, an opportunity to be creative in many areas and very rewarding. It gave me an opportunity to work with everyone in the community.

"When I started this, it was an 8-a.m.-to-8 p.m. proposition, but it grew to a 24-hour service. We got calls from all over the state of Washington and from states as far away as Louisiana, Texas and Arizona.

"Because of the uniqueness of the concept, we reach people no one else can reach. We're non-threatening, we're absolutely confidential. Although a lot of information has been given the public about alcoholism, there's still a stigma attached. A lot of people can't go to their bosses, even their ministers.

"But they can call **Dial-A-Bottle** in privacy and confidence. They don't even have to give their real names." exuding a new confidence these days.

"With Clayton Peterson's help and advice, we'll soon be able to reopen state-wide — and then nationally. I have the Dial-A-Bottle numbers reserved nation-wide.

"Through the marketing plan Clayton is setting up, money to operate the program will come from foundations locally and from businesses nationally. We'll sell the package to each state, but each will have its own program. We'll give the necessary expertise in setting up and in training personnel."

Dial-A-Bottle people may be called on to handle a call for 20 minutes or five hours. Depending on the individual, it takes anywhere from 40 hours to 160 hours to train workers and the training is an ongoing thing.

State-wide, Eva has set a budget for \$83,000. She figures that's not much when you consider what's at stake.

"The social cost of alcoholism in this state last year was \$160 million. We deal with 2,000 clients a month in the state — you figure how much money is saved by helping these people.

"You see, you can't wait until someone's at the bottom of the bottle. You have to help them when alcoholism is still a problem. And 97 per cent of those with problems are your neighbors and mine.

"I feel good now. I was frustrated when we had to close Dial-A-Bottle, because I knew it worked. We were able to take the threat away from the problem. We could talk to people, tell them what it would cost, patch them into a counselor. We always recommended **Alcoholics Anonymous**. And we always encouraged people to call back if they needed help — at any time of the day or night."

Eva is quick to tell you that Dial-A-Bottle is a private, nonprofit agency, not a social agency. Ninety per cent of the people who called in were employed.

"We didn't bill our clients," she said, "so actually we were supplementing the budgets of the agencies to which we referred callers. They were paid, not us.

"I don't want to get into the hassle we had with the county alcoholism people. That's all behind us. We're looking to the future now.

"So far we haven't lost anyone, volunteer or staff, since we temporarily suspended service in March. People are excited that we're going back into business. I feel positive, I feel good about every aspect of the program."

In the meantime, while Clayton works his fund-raising magic, Eva has her public-relations firm, **Images, Ltd.**, doing comprehensive communications and p.r. programs for organizations related to the health-care field. Among her major clients are the **Health and Hospital Service Corp.** of Bellevue, the **Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace** and the **U.W.'s** pregnancy and health study.

But there's one health problem that keeps nagging at Eva Page: Alcoholism.

"Alcohol is a drug, an illness," she said. "If people keep abusing it, they're going to die. That's it."

I'm sure in the next few months there will be some kind of campaign to fund Dial-A-Bottle, but if you'd like to get in on the giving a little early, you can mail a check to Dial-A-Bottle, Box 971, Renton 98055.

It might not do much to your bank account, but it'll sure help Eva Page's dream.