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**Vol XIX April 2005**

**A Postcard  
from the President**

by Caroline Stewart

It seems hard to believe that Spring is upon us again. We here in San Diego County have been blessed with precious rain following years of drought.

Mary Jo Grubbs and I had the good fortune of hiking together in Palm Canyon (Anza Borrego State Park) to get a good look at the wild flowers. We were thrilled by the impressive variety and the beauty of bold colors in a land usually marked by muted desert browns and tans. It was therapeutic for both of us to have some respite from the daily concerns of running households and worrying about our struggling adult children.

Perhaps we could all gather strength from the desert in remembering that all things ebb and flow. We parents of addicted adults need to remember that there is always hope even after a sustained period of disease.

Which brings me to thank everyone who so graciously contributed to our general meeting devoted to harm reduction on Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. I was especially moved by Brent Whitaker's response to my question: "What does harm reduction mean to you?"

Brent works with the San Diego needle exchange program. His answer knocked me out of my seat because of its simple truth. "When people come to us for clean needles we have a chance to engage them." Of course, Brent is telling us that even the simple human task of engaging a person struggling with addiction is a step

**Executive Director's  
Message**

by Gretchen Burns Bergman

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world: indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

In solidifying the goals of A New PATH we actively seek out other groups of individuals and organizations, which are also stakeholders in the war on drugs. We need to continually build our numbers in order to increase the strength of our voice. Alliances and collaboration are essential to accomplishing needed change in drug policy.

In April David Beck-Brown and I participated in Public Health Advocacy Day 2005: Physicians and Communities for Sound Drug Policy, which was jointly sponsored by the California Society of Addiction Medicine, the Drug Policy Alliance, and the Organization to Achieve Solutions in Substance Abuse. We spoke to legislators about:

§ continuing implementation and expansion of Proposition 36

§ repealing outdated insurance laws that prevent emergency room physicians from screening for alcohol and other drug abuse

§ ending unnecessary restrictions on needle exchange programs that save lives

§ opposing the merging of the State Department of Mental Health and the Department of Drug Abuse Programs

## PATH Welcomes Your Involvement

PATH holds quarterly educational speaker meetings. Our next General meeting will be held on June 14, 2005 at 7 pm at Alvarado Parkway Institute, 7050 Parkway Drive in La Mesa, 619- 464-4411.

We invite you to attend and to get more involved in our many projects to reduce the stigma of the disease of addiction and to increase substance abuse treatment options. Prior to the meeting at 6:30 pm we will be holding a support group for all who would like to talk to others who have shared the pain of the family disease of addiction. For information call 619-670-1184.

### Resource Information:

A New PATH: 619-670-1184  
AA Hotline: 619-265-8762  
Alanon, Alateen: 619-296-2666  
Naranon: 858-492-8720  
NA Hotline: 619-584-1007  
Central Public Defender: 619-338-4700  
Juvenile Hall: 858-694-4500  
Las Colinas Jail (women): 619-258-3176  
Mental Health Assoc.: 619-543-0412  
Probation: 619-515-8202  
SD County Jail (men): 619-615-2808  
SD Superior Court Central: 619-531-4420  
Teen Drug Screen, Palmerado E.D., 858-694-8497  
SD County Alcohol & Drug Service Info. & Referral:  
619-692-5727

**Alternative  
News  
Sources**

[www.anewpath.cc](http://www.anewpath.cc)  
[www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)  
[www.narconews.com](http://www.narconews.com)  
[www.drcnet.org](http://www.drcnet.org)  
[www.reconsider.org](http://www.reconsider.org)  
[www.drugpolicy.org](http://www.drugpolicy.org)  
[www.sdchip.org](http://www.sdchip.org)

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Gretchen Burns Bergman, Managing Editor  
Jan Roach, Editor and Designer

A New PATH  
2527 Doubletree Road  
Spring Valley, CA 91978  
Phone (619) 670-1184  
E-mail [gretchenb@abac.com](mailto:gretchenb@abac.com)

Check our website at [www.anewpath.cc](http://www.anewpath.cc)

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### A New PATH 2004 Committees

Please help us move forward with our goals by joining one of our committees:

- ◆ Legislative & Prison Reform
- ◆ PR & Publicity
- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Education & Recovery
- ◆ Fundraising

Contact the office at 619-670-1184 or email [anewpath@cox.net](mailto:anewpath@cox.net) to join a committee.

Our **Board of Directors** meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at 6 pm. Please let us know if you are interested in attending or if you would like to serve as a member of the Board of Directors in the future: 619-670-1184. The next meeting will be held on May 11, 2005.

Please Help Support Our Cause by Purchasing:

**2005 Recovery Calendars \$15**  
**"Givin' Somethin' Back" CDs**  
**by inmate Pierre Alexander \$10**  
Latin Concert CDs \$20  
PATH T-shirts \$10  
Resource Guides \$10  
Musical Gift to Recovery CDs \$10  
PATH License Plate Holders \$5  
Recovery Calendars \$7  
Cassette of Ethan Nadelmann speech  
at February Harm Reduction Conference - \$10

through our office: 619-670-1184

or email: [anewpath@cox.net](mailto:anewpath@cox.net). If you would like us to mail any of these items to you, please add \$4.

## Self-Reflection Garden

A New PATH and inmates in the HOPE program at Donovan State Prison are still working on the Self Reflection garden that was started in 2004. The Garden represents a safe haven where individuals can look within and find hope and serenity to begin the process of recovery from drug addiction. Inmates gave their enthusiasm, sweat and spirit to this ongoing project and remain dedicated despite some setbacks.

Challenges have included the heavy rains and long periods of lock-down when inmates were not able to access the garden to care for it. Replanting has begun and problems are being solved. We will be planning another ceremony when the water feature is installed and the columns are beautified with mosaic tiles.

Thanks to John Bear, the inmate crew, Walter Webb, Colin Khoury, Mary Jo Grubbs, Caroline Stewart, Sylvia Liwerant, Gretchen Burns Bergman, Lili Metz, and countless others who continue to make this project happen.

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## During Alcohol Awareness Month, Web Site Provides Self-Testing, Feedback to Help Identify Alcohol Problems

How much is too much? AlcoholScreening.org, a web site to aid in learning the effects of alcohol on health and well-being, helps answer this question.

During Alcohol Awareness Month (April) and beyond, at AlcoholScreening.org, individuals can take a confidential, informative self-test to assess their drinking patterns and receive personalized feedback. Participants find out whether their alcohol consumption is likely to be within safe limits, or if it may be harmful to their health, now or in the future. Individual results are compared with others of the same age and gender to give participants a true sense of whether they drink more or less than their peers.

The site launched in 2001 during National Alcohol Awareness Month, when the general public is encouraged to learn more about alcohol's effects on health and well-being. Since then, nearly 600,000 people have visited the site and over 270,000 individuals have completed the test, which takes only a few minutes. Many websites have linked to it, including A New PATH ([www.anewpath.cc](http://www.anewpath.cc)).

AlcoholScreening.org also features answers to frequently asked questions about alcohol and health, links to support resources, and a database of 11,000 local treatment programs throughout the US.

AlcoholScreening.org is a free service of Join Together, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health.

Photo

Alcohol abuse and dependence are serious public health problems, resulting in 100,000 deaths per year in the United States and costing the healthcare system billions of dollars annually. Excessive alcohol use is a major cause of injuries, violent crime, lost productivity at work and school, family and social problems, and disease.

Although moderate alcohol consumption is safe for most people, many people do not know what low-risk drinking is, nor do they know the circumstances in which drinking no alcohol is the safest choice. Scientific research has shown that screening and brief intervention can be very effective in prompting people whose alcohol consumption is risky or harmful to cut back on their drinking or seek treatment.

But a large percentage of people don't realize they have an alcohol problem, or are at risk, because no one asks them about their drinking patterns.

AlcoholScreening.org provides a confidential way for people to "ask themselves" about their own drinking behaviors, take positive actions to change if needed, and find helpful resources.

As one anonymous user said: "I think I am a problem drinker. I drink six beers a night (at least). With your help, I hope to bring that number down to zero. Thanks!"

Join Together is a national resource center supporting community-based efforts to reduce substance abuse and gun violence. Primary funding comes from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. More information about Join Together is available at [www.jointogether.org/about](http://www.jointogether.org/about).

## Save the California Youth Authority

By Kenneth R. Clich

Parole Agent, retired, California Youth Authority  
Founder /President Emeritus, Crash, Inc., Drug Program

The call for the destruction of the California Youth Authority is understandable. It has been years since this agency truly salvaged young lives. The philosophy in current institutions parallels the prison system in many respects. The reason is that the macho, get tough attitude of staff eventually superceded the social work approach of treating youthful offenders with a degree of dignity and respect. It was recognized in earlier times that these youth would be returning to their communities and every effort was made to prepare them for re-entry. Youngsters were taught to read, to get along with others and the older youth were given vocational training.

As an example, in the 1960's, many youth delayed their release on parole from the Youth Training School in Ontario to complete a vocational training program. This facility resembled a community college with its comprehensive trade programs and caring staff.

Another example of enlightened and successful corrections was the Men's Colony at Chino under the direction of Kenyon Scudder in the 1940's. Warden Scudder ran this facility for ten successful years without guards, locked gates or guns. Parole successes were high.

The San Diego parole unit of the Youth Authority featured gifted, caring and innovative parole agents. Parole failures were low and successes high.

In the 1950's and later, California had a handle on crime, particularly serious and violent crime. The San Diego Probation Department was top notch as was their honor camp system.

However, it was the California Youth Authority that was the crown jewel of corrections, The Youth Authority was established in 1941 at the recommendation of our enlightened State Bar Association. This new agency offered without a question the most cutting edge treatment approaches and with a large, well staffed research division. The agency soon gained a worldwide reputation for excellence.

Morale was high. New employees in both institutions and parole services were hired for their professional concern for youthful clients and casework skills. This approach paid off with reduced recidivism. Corrections worked within this atmosphere of caring and concern.

In the late 1960's, a change began to occur. The drug subculture, always on the fringes, finally descended like a dark cloud on corrections and had

A New PATH

immediate impact on all segments of the criminal justice system. Congress and State Legislatures over reacted, passing punitive laws that eventually led to the "war on drugs". Drug abuse was viewed within the context of criminology and not as medical or psychological problem. The correctional pendulum swung to the right, to the "lock-em-up and throw away the key" position that led to a hardened public attitude toward offenders.

In California, tough on crime became a sure-fire approach to being elected, especially for attorney general and the governorship. Federal funding for innovative, alternative treatment programs all but disappeared. Instead, twenty prisons were built in twenty years. There was a feeling that harsher measures were in order to deal with the drug crisis.

The Youth Authority made a decision that casework oriented workers would be balanced with more police oriented workers. New parole staffs were recruited from our institutions. Almost all identified with law enforcement and felt that the best protections for society were surveillance and revocation of parole

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### **David Bergman M.D. DLFAPA**

**is pleased to announce  
his office relocation to:**

**3750 Convoy Street #318  
San Diego, CA 92111**

**Phone: 858-292-2929  
FAX: 858-292-2909**

**Email:  
Dbergmanoffice@yahoo.com**

**We are proud to support  
the efforts of A New PATH!**

# From the Inside

with David Beck-Brown

## California's New Hybrid

An experimental hybrid is being designed in California to conserve our natural resources, lower the state's operational costs and strengthen public safety.

It is not a car. It is a new system that combines corrections with rehabilitation and may soon be promoted as the "Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation". Rehabilitation is the latest buzzword in corrections and is intended to reduce California's inmate population and to slow down the revolving door of inmate recidivism. The prison population has been escalating at an alarming rate for several years. An emphasis on rehabilitation in the Department of Corrections is intended to reverse this trend.

However, great designs and slick advertising does not guarantee a good product. Even a fuel efficient hybrid car needs fuel. My Honda Insight is a hybrid that gets between fifty and sixty miles per gallon because it is also powered by batteries that are charged when the car brakes or coasts down hills. The hybrid works because I fill it with gas.

While publicly promoting rehabilitation for California prisons, the state has recently cut ninety-five million dollars (\$95,000,000.00) from its prison rehabilitation and education programs. This is twenty-five percent of the budget for these inmate programs. Trying to run rehabilitant programs without an adequate budget is like trying to run a car without gas.

Wise consumers question a manufacturer's

promises and promotional packages hyped in commercial advertisements. We want to see the goods as well as the promised results. "Where's the beef?" became a popular hamburger advertisement because it fed into the distrust of consumers who have been conned too many times by advertisements promising one thing and delivering something else.

As one tax paying Californian, I do not want to hear politicians say they intend to emphasize rehabilitation within the Department of Corrections as they cut the budgets of its education and rehabilitation programs. This is in addition to cutting programs designed to provide inmates with the tools needed to assist them from returning to prison. In terms of California's most valuable resource, our people, and the high cost of incarceration, rehabilitation needs to become more than a political buzz word.

*David Beck-Brown is Chair of the Prison Reform committee with A New PATH. He has worked at county, state, and federal lock-ups, including the Federal Witness Protection Program.*

## Women Hit Hard

Women are often bit players in drug trafficking, but many have been imprisoned for long stretches, hurting both them and their children, according to a new report from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The Associated Press reported March 17 that the ACLU report, "Caught in the Net," said that 101,000 women were in state and federal prisons in 2003, many on drug charges. That's an eight-fold increase in the female prison population since 1980.

"Drug convictions have caused the number of women behind bars to explode, leaving in the rubble displaced children and overburdened families," the report said.

"Many of the drug conspiracy and accomplice laws were created to go after the kingpins," said Lenora Lapidus, the ACLU women's rights project director. "But women who may simply be a girlfriend or wife are getting caught in the web as well, and sent to prison for very long times when all they may have done is answer the telephone."

The ACLU called for making prison a last resort for drug crimes, and instead investing more in addiction treatment and emphasizing keeping mothers and children connected. Treatment programs should be tailored to meet the unique needs of women, the report stressed.

"When there's a woman defendant with children, we generally try everything we can to put her into rehab rather than prison," said Michael Arcuri, district attorney in New York's Oneida County. "On the other hand, we're supposed to treat everyone the same. You see more women in prison because you see more women selling drugs. Some of them feel that, because we were softer on women in the past, they'll get some sort of easier treatment."

"It's not just an issue of drugs, but of embedded moral values," added Bruce Bullington, a Florida State University criminologist. "We demonize these women, and it comes back to haunt us in a variety of ways."



## President's Postcard

Continued from page 1

forward. His message is the essence of the harm reduction philosophy that the key is helping people to "stay alive for the cure." If we do not engage people suffering with addiction, how can we treat them?

Gretchen Burns Bergman, our intrepid executive director and I have been showing up at meetings all over town. She and I met with Christine Kehoe's legislative aid to promote propositions 36 and 66. I attended the first meeting of the San Diego Disability Coalition (formal name pending). I met some amazing movers and shakers in the disabled advocacy community who welcomed A New PATH with open arms. There was a consensus view that individuals struggling with addiction are too often ignored when it comes to services and policies protecting disabled persons.

Gretchen traveled to Sacramento with a group from the California Society for Addiction Medicine, OASIS and the Drug Policy Alliance to advocate for sound drug policy. She also represents PATH as a new member of the statewide Three Strikes Reform coalition. Go Gretchen! I have, of late, been thinking that you need to run for office yourself because of your affinity for SAC.

As for me, I want to share with all of you that I will be taking a less active role as your president because I will soon begin a new full-time job following fifteen years in private practice. It is my goal to work very hard behind the scenes and to continue my writing and community advocacy.

In closing, I want to let everyone know that A New PATH desperately needs money! Our grant writer is a treasure but we, sadly, keep coming up empty handed. Please, please do anything that you can to support our cause. Re-enroll as a paid member. Attend some of our community charity events (A little bird shared with me that Gretchen is planning a fabulous fashion show called Strut for Sobriety in the fall). Participate in our current "**plant the seeds of hope**" fundraiser. Include PATH in a company-matching fund. Talk to friends, neighbors and family members about our good work. Drought or showers, we will be here working hard for you and your families. Please support our cause by being financially generous.

## Executive Director's Message

Continued from page 1

§ insurance coverage for substance abuse treatment.

Representing A New PATH, I serve on the *Three Strikes Reform Coalition* steering committee, a state-wide partnership of organizations and individuals that have come together to advocate for justice and proportionality in sentencing by reforming California's Three Strikes Law. Eleven years after the passage of the Three Strikes Law, 4200 non-violent third strikers continue to serve 25 years to life in California prisons. The coalition, which includes organizations such as FACTS, ACLU, and the Drug Policy Alliance, has met with Assemblyperson Mark Leno, District Attorney's and Public Defenders to discuss reform proposals. The coalition is united on these points:

§ Changes in the law's prospective application: 25-to-life, third strike sentences should not be triggered by all felonies, as is currently the case.

§ Retroactivity: Some of the people who are currently incarcerated for 25-to-life under our Three Strikes law should be re-sentenced without the third strike enhancement; their new sentence should be based on the facts of the crime that triggered their third strike

§ Precluding re-sentencing for certain third strikers: Some third strike inmates currently serving life for a nonviolent, non-serious offense should not be re-sentenced.

There are also other issues that are being discussed, such as the scope of prospective application and the process for determining eligibility for re-sentencing.

Last November Proposition 66, which would have required a serious or violent crime to trigger a life sentence, was narrowly defeated in the last minute by sensational television and radio ads claiming falsely that it would free tens of thousands of violent criminals. The day after the election the Governor said he would "look into the three strikes system to see if there is anything that ought to be adjusted." The coalition is continuing the fight for justice.

A New PATH is one of more than a dozen organizations in the *Coalition for Effective Public Safety* in California, committed to creating safer communities and reducing prison spending. The plan to reform California's troubled prison system includes:

- § reforming the parole system
- § reducing barriers to re-entering communities for people released from prison
- § providing education and rehabilitation services

to people in prison to reduce recidivism and make California communities safer

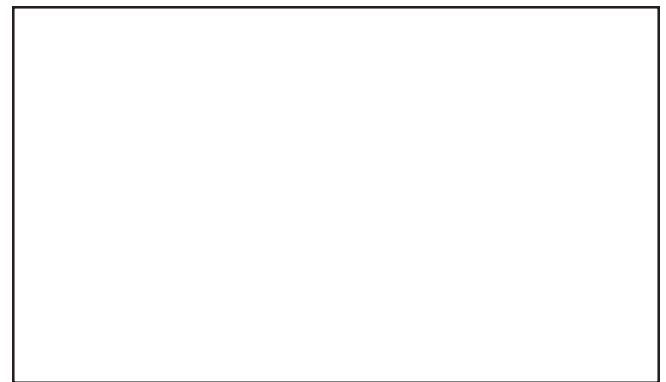
§ sentencing reform

§ enacting a moratorium on construction of new prisons and changing internal Department of Corrections policies.

David Beck-Brown, Sylvia Liwerant and I will be attending a legislative day of action on April 20 in Sacramento with the CEPS coalition.

We are also involved in the statewide effort to continue and expand Proposition 36, which is on pace to help 50,000 people begin healthier, more productive lives in only five years.

Join us in advocating for therapeutic justice. Although one voice can make a difference, many voices singing together can indeed make the world a more harmonious place.



### Support A New PATH by Purchasing Ad Space

A New PATH appreciates your support! We continue to expand and our newsletter now goes out to over 2700 people! Consider purchasing an ad for our July edition.

\$60 - business card      \$125 - 1/4 page  
\$250 - 1/2 page          \$500 - full page

Our printing deadline is June 28, 2005. Make checks payable to A New PATH, 2527 Doubletree Road, Spring Valley, CA 91978. Phone/fax: 619-670-1184. E-mail: [anewpath@cox.net](mailto:anewpath@cox.net). Thanks for all of your support!

## Facts from Samhsa

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services administration of the US Department of Health and Human Services:

- An estimated 1.7 million individuals abused or were dependent upon opioids in 2002.
- The estimated expense to society of opioid addiction nears \$20 billion annually, yet the cost of treating an individual addicted to opioids is only \$4000 per year.
- The stigma experienced by individuals with drug dependence and addiction discourages thousands of opioid-dependent individuals from obtaining treatment.
- Opioid dependence has been treated with methadone for more than 30 years, and the medical consensus is that it is among the most effective treatments available.
- Buprenorphine (Suboxone and Subutex) suppresses withdrawal symptoms and blocks the effects of short-acting opioid drugs. It has been demonstrated to be effective when combined with psychosocial services.

## Treatment Vs. Incarceration Facts

- By 1999 the number of people incarcerated in California for drug offenses has increased to over 25 times the 1980 level (1999-45,455; 1980-1778)
- The majority of those incarcerated are in for simple possession (not for sale) 52.9%
- Compare the costs: Long term residential-\$6800; Incarceration - \$25,900
- 30,469 people in Proposition 36 treatment programs during its first year.
- By saving taxpayers high incarceration costs it is estimated that Proposition 36 saved taxpayers over \$279 million in its first year.

According to a study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse substance abusers who participated in a long term residential program for one year were much less likely to be involved in illegal activity (16% after treatment compared with 40% before treatment)

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## California Youth Authority

Continued from page 4

at the earliest signs of any violation. This influx resulted in a change in union representation. Parole agents voted to drop the California State Employees Association and joined with the prison guard union. This was the beginning of the end for treatment. Parole agents were armed and many male agents carried their badges on their belts, a la police detectives on television.

The good news is that the Youth Authority can be saved. Harry Vorrath, the father of Positive Peer Culture, for the past thirty years, has been called in to turn around out of control youthful institutions. He is well known around the country for using positive peer to help others. He has written a well-received book on his experiences. There is a large body of research supporting the successful results of his program.

The Positive Peer Culture approach relied on establishing a positive peer culture within the institution. It also retrains staff to approach clients with a different attitude. Few staff is terminated. Staff slowly realizes that treating delinquent youth with mutual respect results in lessening of hostility and eventual elimination of violence.

The opening sentence in his book, "Positive Peer Culture" reads, "Young people can develop self-worth, significance, dignity and responsibility only as they become committed to the positive values of helping and

caring for others."

The Positive Peer Culture agency has the expertise and staff to "save the CYA". There are also programs that can make parole rehabilitative service rather than a surveillance agency.

Peer therapy, one person helping another, is the foundation of civilization. It is the basis of Alcoholics Anonymous and the highly successful therapeutic community drug treatment programs around the county. One of these programs in San Diego, in operation for over thirty-five years, has had only one offender client commit a felony while in residential treatment. Peer control, not locked doors, and prevented crime and drug abuse among thousands of residents. These clients lived together in peace and harmony. They were good neighbors. Follow up of graduates also reveal that two-thirds remain free of both drugs and crime, at least twelve months after completing the program. The Department of Justice has found similar results in therapeutic communities across the country.

Parole also can be rehabilitation. In San Diego in the late 1980's and early 1990's the undersigned developed a unique and highly successful parole re-entry committee program that reduced crime, violence and gang activity. This program was presented to the Western Society of Criminology in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1990.

This was not wishful thinking! These programs work, and at much less cost to the taxpayer.

## A New PATH favors these Substance Abuse Legislative Issues in California

AB 125. The California Assembly Public Safety Committee voted to approve this bill, authored by Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, which would equalize sentencing for “crack” cocaine and powder cocaine. Longer sentences have been given to African-Americans and shorter sentences have been given to Hispanics and Whites.

AB 296. Assemblywoman Gloria Negrete-McLeod authored this bill for voluntary hepatitis C screening for prisoners. It passed with 100% of votes in March hearings. With over 600,000 Californians infected with this potentially fatal liver disease, and up to 40% of those released from prisons carrying the virus, this bill offers a public health opportunity to help curb transmission of the virus to the general population—resulting in millions of dollars of savings to California’s health budget.

SB 1159, authored by Senator Vasconcellos, and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger last fall, allows pharmacies to sell syringes without a prescription. Studies show that the sale of syringes without a prescription does not increase drug use or crime. It does reduce the rate of HIV infection among injection drug users.

### **PATH opposes:**

AB 46, authored by Assemblywoman Mimi Walters, would reschedule Ecstasy (MDMA) to Schedule I classification, which would not allow for scientific research into its potential medicinal uses. A New PATH opposes this bill because it would potentially increase drug related arrests and incarceration.

SB803, authored by Senator Denise Ducheny (San Diego), would drastically change Proposition 36 by requiring costly jail terms for nonviolent drug offenders, and it would impede access to employment for people who successfully complete treatment. It limits the number of people eligible for treatment and makes treatment behind bars rather than in the community the norm. PATH encourages you to contact your legislators to voice your opposition to this bill.

### **PATH favors this legislation in the United States:**

Congressman Jim Ramstad introduced legislation in the House of Representatives that would require private insurance plans with coverage for substance abuse treatment to cover alcohol and drug treatment on par with physical health services. For more information: [www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org).

HR 869, a Bill introduced by Republican Souder

would change a restriction on prescribing buprenorphine for treatment of opiate addiction. The original law restricted any group medical practice from treating more than a total of 30 patients, but HR 869 would change the restriction to apply only to individual physicians, making it possible for more people to access this highly effective medication for opiate addiction.

In 1998 an amendment to the Higher Education Act (HEA) included a drug provision that states that if you’ve ever had a drug conviction, you don’t deserve a higher education. Rep. Barney Frank and other members of Congress are advocating for the RISE Act, legislation that would do away with this unfair and punitive law that denies recovering individuals the right to a brighter future. PATH believes that we should restore student aid to people who have already paid their debt to society and who are trying to become productive members of society.

### **PROP 63 Update:**

Prop 63 (Mental Health Services Act), will increase the opportunity for recovery for people with mental illnesses. NAMI California has issued a position paper to help members across the state help their counties make the best use of the funds. For more information go to: [www.namicalifornia.org](http://www.namicalifornia.org).

## Parent Survival Kits

Who do you turn to for help when a loved one has a substance abuse problem? Where do you go for information when your substance abusing family member gets arrested? As parents of offspring whose lives have been devastated by substance abuse and further damaged by their experience with incarceration, we know how confusing and painful this can be.

We have created a Parent Survival Kit, a brochure of information to help parents navigate the criminal justice system. It includes information on when to intervene, warning signs of relapse, court related phone numbers, and the judicial process. Because the kit was funded by a grant from County Supervisor Ron Roberts, we are offering it free of charge to anyone who can benefit by the information. For info: 619-670-1184.

## Women's Prison Project

By Sylvia Liwerant

In our last newsletter we told you about the Book Club for female inmates at the Family Foundations Program. This facility is located in Kearny Mesa and houses around 30 women who are either pregnant or have children under the age of six who live with them in units that have 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a living room. They must complete a one-year program working on their rehabilitation.

I have belonged to a book group for the last 28 years, which I have enjoyed very much, and it occurred to me that creating a book group in the prison, might be something some of the women would enjoy and benefit from. I recruited few volunteers from my book group: Raquel Cohen, Phyllis Epstein, Sheila Hittelman and myself, which I consider to be a strong core of leaders.

Fifteen inmates who like reading signed up for the class, and have their high school diplomas, (some have their GED's). So far we've had four book discussion meetings, which are getting better and better. We talk about the authors, writing styles, what makes the books good or bad, and most importantly, about the different issues a book presents, like behaviors, relationships, feelings, possible ways to handle situations better, etc. I think the program is doing great, and we all are enjoying being together.

I have a good friend who has been involved in Montessori education for a long time, and I contacted her to see if she could help. She loved the project, and immediately volunteered to give the mothers some parenting classes. Silvia Dubovoy holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and is the Director of a Montessori kindergarten in La Jolla. She's also a Montessori teacher's trainer, and people are trained by her from all over the world. She has constant invitations to speak in America, Asia, Europe and Australia.

We are also talking about other projects for the children in the facility, which are very exciting. These haven't yet materialized, but I hope in the next newsletter I'll be able to tell you more about them.

When Elva Salinas heard about our projects, she enthusiastically volunteered to teach writing. She has a Masters degree in Comparative Literature from U.C.S.D. and has been teaching in the English Department in S.D. City College for over 5 years. So, she's conducting a writer's workshop in the facility and we're working on the possibility of having the women earn college credits for it.

## A New PATH Promotes "Harm Reduction Strategies" for Substance Abuse

In an effort to support therapeutic harm reduction strategies in dealing with substance abuse and addiction, A New PATH presented an informative panel discussion with guest speakers who are experts in the field of addiction at our March general meeting. Harm reduction is a public health philosophy that seeks to lessen the dangers that drug abuse and our drug policies have on society.

23 million Americans suffer from substance abuse addiction, and approximately one in four deaths each year is attributable to substance abuse. Untreated addiction costs America \$400 billion per year. Because drug addiction is the number one public health problem in America, we can't afford not to look into harm reduction techniques and the possibility of new, positive solutions.

Caroline Stewart, MA, MSW, LCSW – President of the Board of A New PATH served as moderator of a panel that included: Dr. Robert MacFarlane, Fellow of American Society of Addiction Medicine; Dr. Ken Koury, Past President of SD Psychiatric Society; Patricia Judd, Ph.D., clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCSD School of Medicine; and Brent Whittaker, Executive Director of Harm Reduction Center.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance, "Harm reduction means promoting and implementing pragmatic measures that help save the lives of people who use drugs and that reduce pain or suffering people." A

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I know that the results of our efforts will produce positive effects on these women. Meantime, we've created win-win situations, which we all benefit from and enjoy doing. My heartfelt thanks to all these wonderful volunteers, who are helping A New PATH achieve part of our goals. We very much appreciate their time, efforts and talents.

## “Harm Reduction Strategies”

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New PATH will continue to raise awareness and to encourage open conversation on how harm reduction strategies can be used effectively to save lives and heal communities.

### Syringe Policy Facts:

· Sharing needles results in thousands of HIV and Hepatitis C infections in California every year.

Each year it is estimated that 8000 Californians are infected with HIV. Injection drug use is the second leading cause of those infections. Among children, as much as 75% of new HIV infections are the result of injection drug use by a parent, and three out of four AIDS cases in women are linked to injection drug use.

It is estimated that over 500,000 Californians are infected with the Hepatitis C, which can lead to liver disease and death. Injecting drug use accounts for most of Hepatitis C transmission.

· Needle exchange programs can be an effective part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C. The National Institutes of Health concluded that needle exchange programs showed a reduction in risk behaviors as high as 80% in injecting drug users.

· Needle exchange programs do not increase drug use and can assist users in halting their drug use.

## Seeds of Hope

We want to extend our thanks to all who contributed to our 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, “Seeds of Hope.”

We invited supporters of A New PATH to stay at home on April 10 and spend the afternoon outdoors planting seeds that would blossom into new life, in support of the seeds of hope that PATH plants to help individuals rediscover their lives and grow through recovery. We appreciate your support and hope that donations will continue to be made in order to help us achieve our vision.

Thank you to these underwriters:

Wildflower Sponsors:

Dr. Ken Khoury

Glenn & Virginia Napierskie

City Farmers Nursery

Watercolor & Invitation: Susan Conklin

## rEEG Technology Helps Guide Dual Diagnosis Prescribing

by Amanda Newman

Analysis of brain waves may be a big breakthrough in physicians being guided to the exact medications needed by their psychiatric and chemical dependency patients. Dr. John Milner, medical director of Rancho L’Abri, a dual diagnosis treatment center in San Diego County, is one of a growing number of addiction treating physicians using Referenced-EEG (rEEG) to do just that.

According to a February 2005 article in “Clinical Psychiatry News”: “Using a normative EEG database and an extensive and growing outcomes database of more than 12,000 patient electroencephalograms, researchers have developed the Referenced Electroencephalogram (rEEG), which involved performing an EEG on a patient and then selecting a drug or drug combination based on how other patients with similar patterns have responded to those treatments.”

Medical treatment in psychiatry is symptom-based and largely a process of trial and error. But rEEG provides a biomarker of sorts—a physiological basis for prescribing medications. Dr. Milner explained that is because resting EEG’s are stable over time, and research shows rEEG abnormalities respond predictably to specific medications.

rEEG has been used at Rancho L’Abri as the standard of care for eligible patients for the past 18 months. In evaluating rEEG’s success in treating his dually diagnosed patients, Dr. Milner found rEEG helpful in being guided to the appropriate medications in 56 of 58 patients. Fifty-four of the 58 patients had Clinical Global Impression Improvement scores reflecting “much improved” or “very much improved”. The greatest benefits appeared to occur in the most severely ill patients.

Dr. Milner envisions rEEG as a useful tool in the treatment of children with ADHD. Studies show that successful early treatment helps prevent later substance abuse. “If we could use rEEG to pick the right medication early in these children, we could prevent some of the future substance abuse,” he said.

For anyone interested in learning more about Referenced-EEG (rEEG), they can contact the company’s website, [www.cnsresponse.com](http://www.cnsresponse.com) or call (949)248-5445 or (619)838-9209. In addition to Dr. Milner, other San Diego addiction-treating physicians using rEEG include Dr. Robert MacFarlane, Dr. Donald Dougherty, Dr. John Sack and Dr. Jerry Rand.

## The problem with profiling: simple truths learned from a seed pod

By Caroline Ridout Stewart, LCSW

One of the really important messages that I try to share with my freshman social work students is the importance of challenging our human tendency to judge a book by its cover.

Take the case of a patient with a broken arm waiting in a doctor's office. How would the patient feel if she were to hear the receptionist say to the nurse, "Mrs. 'broken arm' has completed her paperwork and can be seen now"? I am always impressed with the general student reaction to my vignette. They correctly protest that it would be outrageous to identify the patient as "the broken arm" and that to do so would be to objectify and dehumanize her. The students are quick to identify the blatant dangers of using stereotypical markers to identify their clients.

They gallantly argue that the patient is misrepresented by the designation as "the broken arm" because she might be a mother, a painter, a person with high blood pressure or a victim of domestic violence. Sadly, what the students fail to appreciate is that they are not so innocent in their own comfortable pattern of negative profiling.

We all engage in the use of pathological nomenclature to define people we believe we know. Who of us have not used some of the following profiles? The "fat lady" honked her horn at me. The "alcoholic" was late to work again. That "stoner" needs to get a job". "My brother, the "schizophrenic" lives in a board and care." Even I am guilty of this behavior when I describe my son as an "addict". He struggles with marijuana dependence, but he is also a brother, a dog lover, an artist, a music lover, a friend and a person who cares about the environment. To tag my son as an "addict" is really no different than to think of the woman in the doctor's office as Mrs. "broken arm."

We all need to work harder at relating to others in a holistic way. When we over focus on a person's salient deficit or problem, we risk letting that myopic view negatively color what is positive and admirable about the person. Worse yet, we might put all of our social energies into "fixing the problem" in lieu of having a meaningful relationship.

I must admit that it is a huge stretch for me to simply greet my son with a smile or a hug in lieu of honing in on his deficits. Some old standards around our house include: "You need to shave." "Did you see the job announcement I placed on your bedside table?" "Have you called Dr. X?" "You're dog needs water."

"What did you do with the money I gave you yesterday?" and the proverbial old favorite: "What do you intend to do today?" Needless to say, when one has a preconceived notion of one's child as an "addict", there is a certain negative script that defines the relationship.

I have never thought about it this way before but perhaps that is why I have such a problem with the title of "codependent." If my son is the "addict", I must be (God forbid!) the Queen consort "codependent, enmeshed mother". Perhaps my neighbors sigh with disapproval when they walk by my house and say, "There is the home of the queen of codependent, enmeshed mothers."

Yes, I would say. I do have some of the qualities of a codependent mother. But, did you know that my son's learning disability made it impossible for him to tie his own shoes until he was ten? Did you know that my son has a gifted IQ but does not know how to differentiate East from West? Have you ever thought about what it is like to shepherd a disabled child just as one might shepherd a lamb?

I have always wondered what the faithful shepherd dog does when he needs a time out. What happens to his flock when he takes a shower or cooks dinner? I may be a "codependent", but I am also a teacher, an artist, a poet, a neighbor, a wife and a sister. I am a therapist, a social worker, a gardener, a cook and a reader. Mainly, I am a mother whose son is ill and I do whatever I can to help him become a whole person.

Dr. Carol Gilligan of Harvard University takes issue with the whole notion of female codependency. She argues that women have an inherent "ethic of care" which requires them to first think of others before themselves. She believes that it is the ultimate "catch 22" to tag mothers as "codependent". She does not believe that a caring mother could behave otherwise.

Was it my codependency that prompted me to invite my homeless son to Christmas dinner when I ran into him on the street after months of estrangement? Was it my codependency that influenced me to pay for my son's doctor's appointment when he was weak with fever? Was it my codependency that led me to take in my son's dog because that damned dog was the most important being on earth to him after he had driven just about everyone he ever loved away? All I know is that I walk the caring parent-neurotic rescuer tightrope every day of my life and some days I fall off. I am no saint.

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## The problem with profiling

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When my son was just seventeen, my husband and I threw in the towel. We embraced “tough love” as the divine answer to our prayers. We ejected our son from our home and told him to stay out until he was in recovery. We refused to give our son money, food or shelter.

Tragically, we ignored the truth of his severe learning disability hoping that the mean streets would help him to wise up. Jail time, homelessness, physical illness and affiliation with older, predatory people followed. For our son, homelessness was like a tornado that wreaked havoc on even what was good about his life.

Years later, we are still in the process of restoration. Because of our son’s strengths (and our family’s strengths) the good news is that there is measurable progress.

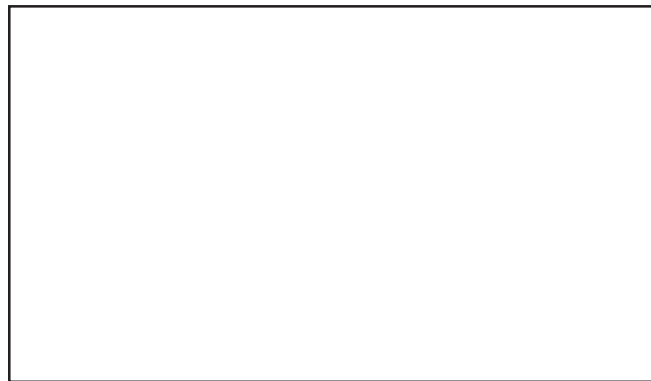
The problem with “tough love” is that in order for it to work, we have to erase all that is good and decent about our loved one from our thinking and target the individual as a “loser”, “Narcissist”, “felon”, “user”, “scumbag” or “addict”. Tough love requires us to embrace negative profiling. How much easier it is to deny social services to someone who we tag as “an illegal alien” than to deny such services to our next door neighbor or coworker. How much easier to eject one’s family member when we think of this person as a “big loser.”

I believe God wants us to practice our best ecological thinking and to be wary of simplistic views of man and nature. Even as I write these concluding remarks, I am moved by the shape and structure of a little brown seed pod on the tree outside my office window. I initially took note of the seed pod because I incorrectly thought that it was a hummingbird. Looking closer, I was absolutely blown away to realize that the pod looks like a hummingbird for a reason. For you see, in this particular species of tree, red throated hummingbirds have nested impervious to public view.



The little brown seed pod is no poser. It has an essential, life-enhancing role for both the tree and the birds. I believe that the pod is nature’s way of distracting predators from the bird’s nesting site.

Furthermore, the little pods--dressed as plain brown male birds--bring additional males to the tree (in competition for females) who, in turn, bring precious pollens from neighboring trees. This is the beauty of looking through the ecological lens when observing nature or human behavior. Examining a pod or a person in a contextual way, allows us to achieve a higher level of empathy and understanding. The “addict”, the “codependent” and the “little brown seed pod” share the mystery of complexity and essential interdependence. In sickness and in health, we are all swimming to the other side.



### PATH is endorsed by

- ⇒ San Diego Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Mental Health Association in San Diego County
- ⇒ NAMI San Diego
- ⇒ Friends of SD Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Families to Amend California’s Three-Strikes
- ⇒ The San Diego District Attorney’s Office
- ⇒ Join Together/Demand Treatment

### Save This Date!

September 17, 2005

A New PATH will present “Strut for Sobriety”  
a luncheon and fashion show produced by  
Gretchen Productions  
at the Wyndham Emerald Plaza Hotel  
For more information: 619-670-1184

September is National Alcohol  
& Drug Addiction Recovery Month

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## Mission Statement

PATH is a voluntary organization of concerned parents of individuals suffering from the disease of addiction. Our PURPOSE is to partner with health care professionals, the justice system, recovering addicts and concerned members of society to seek better understanding of the illness and “therapeutic justice” for substance-related criminal activities.

## Attention PATH Members ...

For immediate and up-to-date information, please send us your e-mail address and we can inform you electronically! Our e-mail address at PATH is [anewpath@cox.net](mailto:anewpath@cox.net)

## History

PATH grew out of a series of pre-Substance Abuse Summit meetings with parents, Superior Court Judges and Officers of the criminal justice system in the Spring of 1999. Founding members are Gretchen Burns Bergman, Sylvia Liwerant and Tom O’Donnell.

### PATH WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

- ⇒ The California Endowment
- ⇒ The Fund for Drug Policy Reform of the Tides Foundation
- ⇒ Las Patronas
- ⇒ Join Together/Demand Treatment
- ⇒ San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts

**For their generous support!**

Please visit our website:  
[www.anewpath.cc](http://www.anewpath.cc)

## Our Proposals for Alternative Sentencing

- 1) Long-term mandatory rehabilitation in a structured alcohol and drug-free recovery environment for non-violent offenders.
- 2) If the nature of the crime does not allow for this alternative, sentencing should include immediate placement in a rehabilitation and recovery program within the prison system.
- 3) Upon release from prison or recovery homes, substance abusers should be mandated to a transitional program in a sober-living environment to prepare them to re-enter society.