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Gretchen Burns Bergman



Vol XX July 2005

**A Postcard
from the President**

by Caroline Stewart

Hello everyone,
Time sure flies when you are having fun. It's summer in San Diego again and Donald (our intrepid board secretary and my better half) and I just realized that we haven't yet been to the beach. As devoted boogie boarders this fact testifies to how busy we are.

We did go to a summer concert at Humphries this past week and dined out on the harbor-side deck at the Fish Market on Sunday evening. The view of Pt. Loma and the bustling harbor were breathtaking.

However, this very morning while traveling through my own neighborhood in Mission Hills, I was sadly reminded that not everyone in San Diego enjoys its beauty. Within one block of my home, I spotted no fewer than five disheveled, homeless men sleeping on the sidewalks. Thank god for our beloved PATH which continues to advocate for individuals tragically impaired by substance abuse and mental illness.

Sylvia Liwerant reports that her prison book club and Montessori training classes for mothers in prison are growing in popularity with both the inmates and the staff.

Mary Jo Grubbs continues her Sisyphean task of bringing beauty to the HOPE program at Donovan Prison. Because of her effort, a beautiful stone fountain is due to be installed on July 26th.

Gretchen Burns Bergman has joined Mary Jo in pushing the boulder up hill as she works tirelessly to promote Prop 36.

**Executive Director's
Message**

by Gretchen Burns Bergman

**We are a drug-seeking society:
So what is the stigma all about?**

If we have a cold - we seek drugs for relief; if we feel depressed - we search for a pill to lift our spirits; if we have trouble sleeping - the medicine cabinet is the place we go for help; if we are overweight - the search is on for pills to take away hunger urges or pills to cut the fat. One pill makes you larger and one pill makes you small....

I delivered my sons by natural childbirth, because I felt that a drug-free delivery was safer, and returning to the natural rhythms of life was right. I developed the philosophy that the male dominated medical profession pushed the drugs because they felt that women were incapable of getting in touch with their own maternal instincts. The fear of blundering when it comes to something so deeply important drove many women to turn the process over to a medical professional, and the fear of pain made it easier to numb the experience.

I loved nursing my babies. It gave me a chance to breathe in the sweet scent of my infants and to rock in harmony with them and the universe. I enjoyed being a mother to young boys who were full of life and mischief. I can still conjure up the smell of dirty socks after a little league game, the sound of laughter at "bathroom humor", and wet kisses from an exuberantly affectionate 8 year old. My two sons were bright and

PATH Welcomes Your Involvement

PATH holds regular educational speaker meetings. Our next General meeting will be held on December 13 at 7pm at Alvarado Parkway Institute, 7050 Parkway Drive in La Mesa (619-465-4411).

We invite you to attend and 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. This meeting is our annual membership meeting and Holiday Party. 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

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?

We have crated a 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.

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
- ⇒ Drug Policy Alliance

A New PATH

A New PATH 2005 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 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 August 10 at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital.

Please Help Support Our Cause by Purchasing:

- 2005 Recovery Calendars on sale for \$7 each
- "Givin' Somethin' Back" CDs
by inmate Pierre Alexander \$10
- Latin Concert & Musical Gift to Recovery CDs \$10
- PATH License Plate Holders \$5
- Harm Reduction CD
of Ethan Nadelmann \$10
- Silver "PATH to Recovery" cause bracelets -- 3/\$10

through the PATH office: 619-670-1184 or email: anewpath@cox.net. If you would like us to mail any of these items, please add \$4.

A New PATH newsletter is published quarterly by the Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing non-profit organization.

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

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A New PATH Presents Strut for Sobriety!



Join us in a celebration of recovery from substance abuse and addiction!

What: A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing) will present the first annual “*Strut for Sobriety*” luncheon, “Path to Recovery” awards ceremony and fashion show.

When: Saturday September 10, 2005 from 10:30am – 2:30pm.

Where: Emerald Wyndham Plaza Hotel.

This unique event, co-chaired by **Connie Conard** and **Gretchen Burns Bergman**, will feature a silent auction and boutique at 10:30 a.m. followed by a luncheon, awards ceremony, entertainment and fashion show. **Virginia Napierskie** will serve as Honorary Chair of the Honorary Committee that includes Margaret Duff, David Beck-Brown and Peggy Matthews. **Rory Devine**, news reporter for KNSD 7/39 will be our celebrity emcee and radio personality **Joe Bauer** will serve as silent auction emcee.

Individuals will be honored for their efforts to reduce the stigma of drug addiction and for their contributions to ending discrimination against those who seek treatment and recovery from substance abuse. We are proud to announce the 2005 honorees of the “Path to Recovery” awards: **Whitney Taylor**, Executive Director of the Drug Policy Forum of Massachusetts; **Sylvia Liwerant**, Co-Founder of A New PATH and founder of the Book Club Behind Bars; **Pat & Russ Wittberger**, founders of GRASP and Jenny’s Journey; and **Francine Anzalone-Byrd**, Executive Director of North County Serenity House.

An entertaining fashion show, produced by Gretchen Productions will feature fashions by Viejas Outlet Center worn by professional models as well as guest models in recovery. **Glenn & Virginia Napierskie** are the Sapphire Sponsor and **Viejas Enterprises** is the Amethyst Sponsor of the event.

September is National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month. “*Strut for Sobriety*” coincides with efforts made throughout the country to end discrimination against individuals who suffer from the disease of addiction. Substance abuse is a public health problem that affects millions of Americans, regardless of age, cultural background, race or profession. The event benefits A New PATH’s efforts to reduce the stigma in order to increase access to quality substance abuse treatment services. PATH’s goals are to save lives, heal families and move towards a healthier society.

VIP tables of 10 are \$750 and individual tickets are \$60 each.

For ticket information or to schedule an interview, please contact A New PATH:

Gretchen Burns Bergman at 619-670-1184 Email: anewpath@cox.net website: www.anewpath.cc



Self-Reflection Garden at Donovan State Prison – History & Update

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing) does ongoing advocacy work to expand substance abuse treatment opportunities behind bars (as well as in the community). 85% of people behind bars are there for alcohol and drug-related reasons, yet there is very little substance abuse treatment available in prison.

The concept of the Self-Reflection Garden sprang up as a first step to expanding addiction treatment and services in prison, and to give a sense of hope and empowerment to people whose lives are being wasted behind bars.

Sylvia Liwerant and Gretchen Burns Bergman met with Warden Hernandez at Donovan State Prison in January 2003 and were granted permission to begin the project. In December 2003, PATH presented the plans and the project to the inmates of the Hope program who would be involved in the planning and upkeep of the garden. The response was enthusiastic and uplifting.

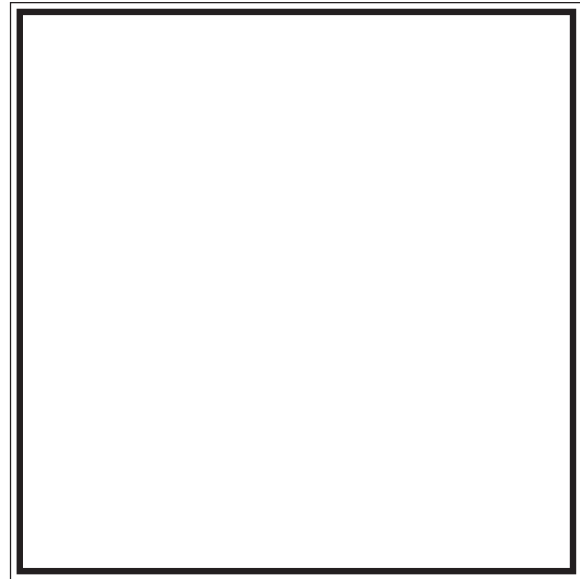
Inmates have participated in the planning, creation and care of the garden, thereby adding a restorative element to the project. They are contributing to their own therapeutic process while working collaboratively with other inmates. The pride they take in the project is apparent and inspiring. Countless individuals have donated materials and money to make the garden a reality.

On January 30, 2004 inmates broke ground on Phase I of the 2-phase project. A ceremony for the Completion of Phase I was held on May 21, 2004 with two of the pillars being inscribed with the words “Hope” and “Unity”.

A ceremony for the completion of Phase 2 was held on July 29, 2004 that included the walking of the labyrinth, a performance by inmate Pierre Alexander, and certificates given to the participants. KUSI TV and other media covered the event. Two more pillars were inscribed with the words “Perseverance” and “Integrity”.

In August 2005 a fountain will be dedicated to the garden in a small ceremony. In Fall 2005 a final ceremony is being planned when more plants are added and colored tiles are mounted to the pillars. The last two pillars will then be dedicated with words chosen by the inmate participants.

A big thank you to everyone (and there have been so many) who gave of their time, spirit, sweat and hearts to make this project a success.



Postcard from the President

Continued from page 1

Please everyone....this is one fight we cannot afford to lose. Call your elected officials in support of Prop 36.

In June, representatives of the Drug Policy Alliance graciously attended our quarterly general meeting to discuss both state and federal drug policy issues. Dear Alberto Mendoza drove all the way from LA with an injured back from a recent accident to support our cause.

And, hallelujah, San Diego now has its own local DPA rep, Margaret Dooley. Margaret comes to San Diego as a journalist via an extended stay in China. She will be an essential link between PATH and the broader DPA movement.

Finally, you had all better put on your high-heeled sneakers for the STRUT FOR SOBRIETY on September 10th at the Wyndham Emerald Plaza Hotel. This fabulous fashion show starts with a 10:30 AM boutique and silent auction followed by the main show and luncheon at noon. The S for S committee is once again preparing to knock your socks off. Please come and show your support for PATH and its important mission.

See you at the Strut,
Caroline

**Alternative
News
Sources**

www.anewpath.cc
www.jointogether.org
www.narconews.com
www.drcnet.org
www.reconsider.org
www.drugpolicy.org
www.sdchip.org
www.centerforce.org
www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

From the Inside

with David Beck-Brown

Colombia

Enjoy drama? Tell people you're going to Colombia to research an article about the War on Drugs.

Their reactions will be quick and spontaneous: "ARE YOU CRAZY!" "Be careful." "Don't get killed." "What are you up to?" Their facial expressions will span emotions from compassion, concern to utter disbelief. Trying to talk with someone with a confused and glazed look is a conversation stopper.

In the United States, Colombia is synonymous with cocaine, covert paramilitary activities, poverty, and the dangers associated with organized crime. Confirm this by reading any newspaper report about Colombia.

People will share stories of death squads, drug busts, kidnapped tourists, ransoms and other perils while traveling through the country.

Is there any good news coming out of Colombia? Apparently not. A pattern in newspaper articles suggest information printed in one story is based on information taken from another story, with neither reporter ever traveling to Colombia. These stories rely heavily on official government statistics, hearsay and the global perception. With the Internet offering ample information to anyone wishing to compile a well-researched article, why expose oneself to the difficulties and unpleasantness of modern travel?

News should not be entertainment. A writer needs first hand experience when asking the questions of What? When? Where? Why? and How? What can the sounds of the forest add to a story originating in Colombia? When is it necessary to feel the heat rising off parched soil? Where is it said a reporter must breathe the smells of a city following a heavy rain? Why travel? How can experiencing a place influence the story?

Following travel recommendations to Colombia,

medical preparation suggest vaccinations against Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, tuberculosis, Yellow Fever, Tetanus, Measles, Mumps, and Rabies, among other diseases. Because I opted not to get the rabies vaccination, I was advised not to touch animals while in the Andes. If that didn't get my attention, just before being injected with the Yellow Fever vaccine the medical clinician told me the injection can be fatal.

Oh well, I'm going to Colombia. What are the odds of dying from a vaccine when there are so many other dangers of mythological proportions?

Is there more to Colombia than drugs? The United States has three hundred military advisors in the country once known for its majestic Andes, beautiful waterfalls, natural forests, indigenous llamas and ancient civilizations with colorful and rich traditions? What about them? What about the people? How has the War on Drugs affected the people of Colombia? There must be a story here. I'm going to Colombia write it.

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.

Regular Business Card Ad

Explosive rhetoric about meth problem

Two surveys released by the National Association of Counties in July, entitled "The Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities" and "The Impact of Meth on Children" have prompted a rash of dramatic media coverage. We fear that this will create panic and support tough-on-drug-crime legislation that has been proven to be destructive to individuals with the disease of addiction and to our society.

In July 2005 the San Diego Union Tribune printed an article about the Methamphetamine problem called "Killer Meth". Margaret Dooley, the new representative for the Drug Policy Alliance in San Diego responded with this letter to the editor:

"Meth is the nation's top drug problem" (News, July 6) serves only to fuel hysteria over methamphetamine use in this country. The new National Association of Counties survey describes methamphetamine as "the nation's leading law-enforcement scourge — a more insidious drug problem than cocaine."

We cannot be led by such explosive rhetoric to repeat the mistakes of the 1980s. American society is still struggling to recover from its response to the so-called crack cocaine epidemic, which included harsh mandatory minimum sentencing laws that targeted low-level offenders and people of color.

However, as alarm about methamphetamine grows, lawmakers are returning to such legislation to proclaim themselves tough on drugs and crime. Panic by legislators and the media about methamphetamine is now poised to escalate the drug war again, despite lessons from the 1980s.

Let us be wise enough not to allow this to happen.

Beware of HR 1528

(Information from Families Against Mandatory Minimums)

H.R. 1528 (introduced by Rep. James Sensenbrenner, contains new drug-specific mandatory minimum sentences for new offenses that would give rise to disparities in drug sentencing. It includes a number of new "two-strikes-and-you're-out" mandatory life sentences for certain crimes.

Our fear is that instead of protecting children, the bill will split families apart. Even parents who are not drug involved will go to prison for a mandatory minimum term of 3 years if they are aware of drug trafficking offenses affecting their minor children, but fail to report the offense to the police within 24 hours--and then take steps to substantially assist the authorities in the investigation of the crime.

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 October edition.

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

Our printing deadline is September 30, 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. Thanks for all of your support!

Help A New PATH reduce the Stigma of Substance Abuse and Celebrate Recovery!

In order to celebrate the "silver lining" of sobriety, and to show your support of loved ones in recovery, or your pride in your own recovery, we invite you to join us in wearing "PATH to RECOVERY" silver cause bracelets.

You can order them through the PATH office by emailing: anewpath@cox.net or calling 619-670-1184 and we will mail them to you right away. We ask you to purchase 3 for \$10, so that you can wear one and give the others to friends in recovery, or you can purchase one for \$5.

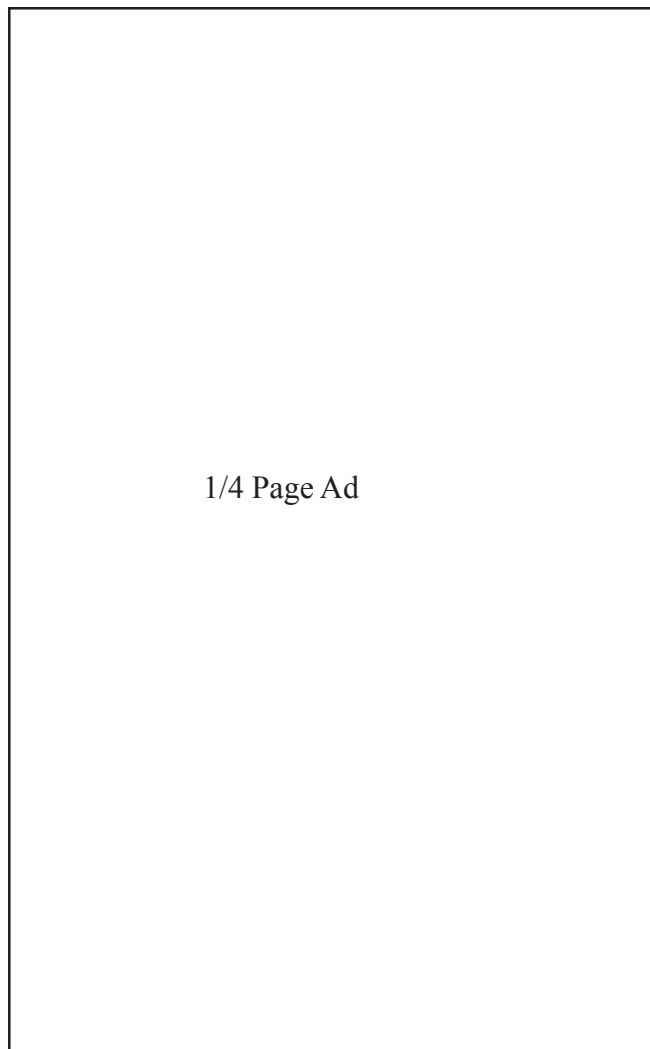
We want to see these bracelets worn throughout the community so that others can appreciate the growing number of people taking pride in recovery!

Regular Business Card Ad

Untitled Poem from “The Dinner Party”

Judy Chicago

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh
and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both men and women will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another’s will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs
of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth’s abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the
old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life’s creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and
the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.



Released Offenders Face Housing, Work, and other Hurdles

Join Together 5/25/05

The Wall Street Journal stated on May 24 that millions of Americans released from prison after serving time on felony charges or for other offenses face a constellation of challenges as they try to regain a normal life,

“It’s one battle after the next—trying to obtain housing, trying to obtain employment,” said Jacqueline Smith, 38, who served more than nine years in a New York prison on crack-cocaine and is now working as a cook. But she can not get public housing assistance because of her criminal record. “I want a second chance. I want people to see I made mistakes, but I am making it right.”

Each year about 630,000 people are released from jails and prisons. In addition to preexisting problems like lack of education and poverty, they face a number of bans on student loans, public housing, and other assistance.

But in the face of high recidivism costs, some policymakers are starting to realize that continuing to punish offenders after they serve their sentences may actually be hurting society as much as criminals.

In Congress, lawmakers led by Rep. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) recently introduced The Second Chance Act, which would earmark \$80 million to help ex-offenders reenter society.

“One barrier may not be that big a deal,” says Debbie Mukamal, director of the prisoner reentry institute at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. But cumulatively, she said, the barriers send the message to offenders that “You’re not wanted.”





The truth is in the numbers: Prop 36 is a success!

- Prop 36, the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, passed by 61% of the popular vote in California in 2000.
 - Nearly 36,000 people are enrolled in Prop 36 each year, compared with just 3,000-4,000 that went through drug courts each year before 2001.
 - With thousands of people diverted to drug treatment, the state saved nearly \$220 million in just the first two years of Prop 36 (even after treatment costs were paid for).
 - In the first two years, Prop 36 introduced over 30,000 people to treatment for the first time and another 17,000 people to their second program.
 - Almost half of those entering treatment for the first time through Prop 36 (nearly 15,000 people) had been using drugs for over a decade.
 - Nearly 75% of those who begin Prop 36 treatment get a significant exposure to treatment and achieve positive outcomes.
- 34% of Prop 36 clients completed treatment in the program's first year—very close to completion rates for other treatment clients (including those from drug courts) at the same time.

For more information on Prop 36, visit www.drugpolicy.org or www.prop36.org
To get involved, contact Margaret Dooley at mdooley@drugpolicy.org

You are invited!

If you believe *the war on drugs is doing more harm than good*, join us at **The 2005 International Drug Policy Reform Conference** in Long Beach in November (10th, 11th & 12th).

Over 1,000 people from across the country and around the world will gather there to learn more about a wide range of drug policy reform issues—and to strategize and mobilize for reform.

Find out more and register at:

www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/

If you are a community activist, elected official, criminal justice professional or reform advocate, public health administrator, health care or drug treatment professional, educator, student, person in recovery, or a family member or friend of a drug war prisoner this conference is for you!

The Dog Ate my Homework or What to do Until Your Prefrontal Cortex Arrives

by Caroline Ridout Stewart

My 13-year-old son, Hugh, really knows how to get my goat. He has a favorite character on the cartoon program South Park named Cartman. Whenever Cartman (or Hugh) is asked to do something (take out the trash or tackle his homework) he says, "Whatever, whatever... I do what I waaaaannntttt!"

Now, of course, a healthy, rebellious teenager must enjoy the audacity implied in Cartman's message. Imagine a world, thinks the envious teen, in which one can entirely follow one's own muse. Yes, I say, imagine a world in which you can play Tony Hawk Pro skater for 48 hours in a row. Imagine a world in which you can eat sixteen frozen taquitos in one glorious sitting. Imagine a world in which your dirty clothes may pile up beside your bed to the point that there is no danger in falling out. Wouldn't we all be better off if we could just do what we waaaaannntttt? Nooooo!

Imagine that you have a terrible headache and you cup the area over your right eye with your hand. The area you have cradled is called the prefrontal cortex. Neuropsychologists teach us that it is the prefrontal cortex that tempers our inherent self-interest. Psychologists call the generic mandate of the prefrontal cortex our executive functioning. Without the prefrontal cortex we might be a world of Cartmans walking around in self-absorbed entitlement. The prefrontal cortex is that part of the brain that helps us to think contextually. It is the part of the brain that gives us foresight (if I stay up partying with my friends until two AM there is a good chance I will not perform well on tomorrow's calculus exam), empathy (I probably better call my wife and tell her why I am late because she will worry that I have been in an accident) and respect for societal norms (I am totally starving and there is a lovely piece of chocolate cake sitting in front of me. Too bad I am the waiter who served it).

As surprising as it may seem, neuropsychologists have only recently documented that the prefrontal cortex in the human brain is not fully wired until the age of around 25. In other words, most children and many adolescents lack the brain structure that is a requisite component to "mature" thinking. I myself was a straight A student when in high school but I will never forget when my boyfriend and I parked our car in a dirt parking lot overlooking the ocean. It seemed like such a romantic spot. A better wired brain might have anticipated the tidal flood that silently entrapped the parked car and prevented its horrified occupants from alerting their parents. Where was the foresight and empathy for the frantic parents whose children were missing and whose family car was totaled by water damage? Where were those frontal lobes when we needed them?

I was recently painfully reminded that our adult son began dabbling with marijuana use at the tender age of fourteen. As a youngster with a history of prefrontal cortex compromise (Attention Deficit Disorder), adding marijuana to the mix was tragic insult to injury. And yet, how is a boy with impaired executive functioning in any position to "just say no." For teens, there is no "just" about it. There is nothing simple or easy about walking away from an activity that promises immediate gratification and social connection. Even we adults with excellent executive functioning continue to struggle with the "shoulda, woulda, coulda" voices of our

mature selves. Who of us has not eaten that extra bite of ice cream, or stayed up that extra hour watching junk TV or put just one more restaurant dinner on our growing Visa bill. We could all benefit from a brake realignment.

As a psychotherapist, it is one of my greatest pleasures in life to help my clients feel less pathological about what ails them. I tell them not a single worm, bug, snake, mouse or human being wakes up in the morning and thinks to itself, "How can I defeat myself today?" No animal on earth willfully destroys itself or sets out to fail. It is the inherent drive of every living thing on earth to stay alive. When we fail, it is the tragic outcome of our failed best effort to survive. This is especially true of adolescents with incomplete frontal lobe development. As we might have heard our mothers say, "Have compassion. God is not done with him yet."

From the vantage point of middle age, marijuana is an instant turnoff. It slows the mind. It disengages one's motivation and drive. It smells bad and burns holes in one's clothes. But primarily we adults know that marijuana use is illegal! Thinking with foresight, we are unwilling to risk what we have for a moment of possible gratification. This is one place where promoting catastrophic thinking is a really good idea. Let's see. Would I rather be pumping iron in the yard at Donovan Prison or would I like to be lying on the beach at La Jolla shores reading a novel? Our fully functioning prefrontal cortex is only too happy to put together a horrific graphic visual of life in the prison yard that will instantly steer us clear of marijuana.

Somehow, the poorly constructed adolescent brain is less able to deflect the individual from dangerous behavior. To the contrary, the adolescent brain even seems enamored of risk-taking behavior. To the mind of a teen, marijuana is cool. When we smoke, we stop worrying about the math test we haven't studied for. We feel welcomed by others and part of a cohesive community. We live in the moment. We enjoy the edginess of acting out. Our drug use helps define us. "We know who we are and we are not you (adults)!" Is it not difficult to understand the youthful attraction to this powerful, mind-altering agent.

So what is a loving parent to do? Should we give up? Lock our children in the house? Kick them out? Send them to boarding school? Just say, "No"?

The answer lies with harm reduction. The key is keeping our children alive and engaged while we wait for the prefrontal cortex to wire in. We here at A New PATH hang in with our young people even when they are driving us crazy. We invite them to church ten times even though they turn us down ten times. We invite them to family dinners twenty times even though they turn us down twenty times. We walk into their rooms and talk about the weather. We are shepherds gently corralling what is good, true and hopeful about our youth. We stay engaged in any way that our children will let us stay engaged.

Some of you might call us codependent. We prefer to think of ourselves as abiding. We want to be there to catch our young adults being good. To catch that first ray of prefrontal thinking as it emerges. A more mature Cartman might say, "Whatever... whatever... I do what makes sense balancing my owns needs with the greater, ecological good." Go Cartman! Go prefrontal cortex!

Executive Director's Message

continued from page 1

beautiful. One had big brown eyes, brunette curls and a thoughtful nature, and the other was a sunny freckle-faced blonde with a carefree attitude. My greatest hope was that they become happy and healthy adults.

Sadly, happiness, for the most part, has eluded them and their health has been severely affected by the insidious disease of drug addiction. Now, in their early thirties, they are both recovering heroin addicts, and they will grapple with the challenges of this chronic illness throughout their lives.

Why me? There was a time when I was jealous of my older sister, because she was able to mother in the way that felt natural to both of us. I wanted to be a giving, lenient, progressive, understanding and loving parent. Instead, because my sons became drug addicts, I was labeled a co-dependent.

That loose-loving parenting style only works when the parent/child fit is right. I was resentful of my kids for not allowing me to parent in a way that was comfortable and joyful to me. I call the experience of loving, cajoling, threatening and nurturing an active adolescent addict the "strangulation tango".

But, my sister's son (my beloved nephew) died in a ski accident when he was 17. How could my pain compare to my sister's agony! She had to learn to accept the oh-so-final tragedy of no more tomorrows. I learned not to ask "why me?" At least I can have hope.

I have always experienced emotional highs and lows. When I am low it isn't that I don't love life, it is the feeling of inability to be at one with the joy. I am grateful to be able to vent extreme feelings through creative pursuits. Perhaps it has eliminated the need for my finding a pill to fix it. Anyway, involving myself in the dance of life somehow always whisks me away from the depths of doom and despair.

Our world is filled with hypocrisy, envy, pain, fear – and, beauty, grace, and laughter. For every act of hatred there is a random gesture of human kindness. It is about balance. But, our society seems to be off-kilter of late.

For example: when did it become tolerable that government officials lie to us? We are fighting a war on foreign soil and losing lives everyday because we were fed false information. I equate it to doctors who want to bring babies into life unassisted by the women whose bodies they are coming out of. Legislators are acting as if the population is too uninformed to make clear decisions about its own wellbeing. So, even in moral judgment and individual health choices the

government is taking charge in order to "protect us". Maybe many of us have forgotten how to think for ourselves. Learning facts without learning how to problem solve can cripple independence. Possibly we became too wealthy with too many choices, and so frustrated by the impossibility of finding a direction, and so despondent that our voice wasn't being heard anyway, that we rolled over and let the "fittest and strongest" take charge.

We have experimented with drugs for centuries, whether the motive was pure pleasure-seeking, "truth" finding, self-medicating, or doctor-prescribed. But, people who don't obey "moral" rules are punished in this society. There are 2.2 million people behind bars in the United States today, and 750,000 are there for non-violent drug possession offenses.

My son was one of those numbers of incarcerated. He served several sentences for non-violent drug offenses and relapse, and was involved in the criminal justice system for 11 years of his young adult life, at extreme financial cost to the state, and physical, mental and emotional cost to him and to our family. What was the point?

The War on Drugs costs taxpayers roughly \$40 billion annually in direct costs and tens of billions of indirect costs. After more than three decades of the Drug War, drugs today are cheaper, purer, and more easily obtained than ever before. We will never eradicate drugs from our society, so we better figure out how to more conscientiously reduce the harm.

Perhaps we are a nation of depressed people and perhaps there is a pill to fix it, or at least to numb it. Maybe we also need to embrace the struggle and process the pain in order to achieve inner-peace. Many of us get lost along the way, whether it is depression, or the many foibles of egotism, or drug abuse.

We all walk through the valley of the shadow of death, knowing that death is inevitable, and that if we ponder that reality too much it could affect the quality of our lives and our ability to experience the moment. Stigma is damaging and discrimination is destructive. We all live in glass houses. Instead of throwing rocks of criticism at our neighbors for their frailties, we should offer a helping hand and seek positive solutions to our society's problems with drug abuse together.

Wave of Hepatitis C Problems Expected

Join Together Online

While the rate of new cases of hepatitis C has fallen in recent years, health professionals are bracing for the impact of the disease among the millions who were infected during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, the Wall Street Journal reported May 31.

Many baby boomers don't even know they are carrying the virus, which can lay dormant for many years before emerging with symptoms that include jaundice, abdominal pain, and nausea. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver disease and causes up to 10,000 deaths annually.

Sharing of contaminated needles by drug users, blood transfusions, and unprotected sex can spread the virus; improved screening and needle-exchange programs have cut the infection rate by 90% since 1989. Four million Americans are suspected of having the hepatitis C virus. Drug treatment has improved; about 20% of victims can eliminate the virus with treatment.

Alcohol Exclusion Law

A sweeping state insurance law known as the Uniform Accident and Sickness Policy Provision Law, or UPPL, contains a provision in many states that allows insurance companies to deny coverage to those injured while under the influence of alcohol. These alcohol exclusions inhibit doctors from testing injured patients for the presence of alcohol, which in turn prevents detection of drunk drivers and results in lost opportunities for screening and treatment of those with alcohol problems. There is a bill moving through the legislature in California that would repeal this law. For more information about these exclusion laws: <http://www.ensuringsolutions.org/alcohol-exclusions/>

Attitudinal barriers pose greatest obstacle to methadone treatment programs in Jails

(Alcoholism Drug Abuse Weekly)

Correctional facilities need to focus on staff attitudes and knowledge about methadone, according to a recent study which found that older and more educated security staff and medical staff can lead the way in helping methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) gain acceptance in correctional clinics.

Establishing prison-based MMT has long been a goal of advocates. In most localities, jail inmates are usually forced to abruptly end MMT. Efforts to improve access to MMT and buprenorphine treatment in jails include pending legislation in New Mexico and an American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence project.

Inhalants

(from NIDA Community Drug Alert Bulletin)

One of the most dangerous substances abused by children and teens may be found in the home. These toxic substances are collectively referred to as inhalants – breathable chemical vapors that produce mind-altering effects. A variety of common products contain substances that can be inhaled, such as spray paints, nail polish remover, hair spray, glues, and cleaning fluids.

In 2002, the Nation's emergency departments reported almost 1,500 mentions of inhalant abuse by patients. Regular abuse of inhalants can cause serious damage to major organs, including the brain, liver, heart, kidneys, and lungs. Even a single session of repeated inhalations can lead to cardiac arrest and death by altering normal heart rhythms or by preventing enough oxygen from entering the lungs, causing suffocation.

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§ In the last 20 years, over 200 pregnant women or new mothers have been arrested in a concerted effort to deny women liberty. At least 19 states now address the issue of pregnant women's drug use in their civil child neglect laws, and many of these states make it possible to remove a child from the mother based on nothing more than a single positive drug test. These cases and statutes are having a devastating effect on public health efforts, as well as women's reproductive rights, drug policy reform efforts, and efforts for racial equality. (From the website of National Advocates for Pregnant Women)

§ The U.S. has endorsed a global HIV prevention strategy for the U.N. that urges access to sterile syringes and respect for the human rights of drug users. "While it's hard to know what lever moved the U.S. it's clear that the hard work of AIDS activists, human rights groups, and country delegates themselves didn't hurt," said Daniel Wolfe, deputy director of Open Society Institute's International Harm Reduction development Program and one of those advocating for inclusion of language on sterile injection equipment. (Drug Policy Alliance July 2005)

§ With 714 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, the United States remains the country with the highest incarceration rate in the world, ahead of Russia and Belarus. The United States has held first place in this ranking since 2000. Of nine million people imprisoned in the whole world, more than 2 million (22% of the total) are behind American bars. (Associated Press from report published in June 2005 from King's College, London)

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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

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

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.