

Board of Directors

Caroline Stewart, LCSW

President

John Wead

Vice President

Donald Stewart, Ph.D.

Secretary

Chris Johnson

Treasurer

Claudio Cabrejos, MD, MPH

Vivian Eisenecher

Anita Fisher

Jeff Jeffery

Rev. Dennis Malone

Lisa Overton

Barbara Pevney, RN MPH

Advisory Board

Dr. David Bergman

Psychiatrist, Medical Director

Ken Cilch

Pres. CRASH Inc.

Judge Robert Coates

San Diego Superior Court

Margaret Dooley Sammuli

Drug Policy Alliance

Steven E. Feldman

Attorney at Law

Dr. Ken Khoury

Psychiatrist

Valerie Lemke

P.R. Consultant

Sylvia Liwerant

PATH Co-Founder

Mick Meagher

Attorney at Law

John de Miranda, Ed.M.

FAVOR Reg. Bd. Member

Dr. Rodrigo Munoz

Psychiatrist

Dr. Jerry Rand

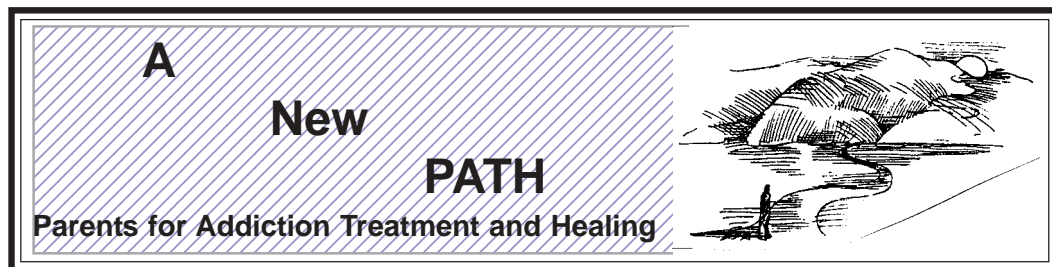
Bay Recovery Centers

Whitney Taylor

Drug Policy Consultant

Executive Director

Gretchen Burns Bergman



Vol XXXVI July 2009

Postcard from the President by Caroline Stewart

I don't know about the rest of you but it doesn't feel much like summer yet. The Spring winds have been cold and I am sick of June gloom. Literary people say that one way that a writer can set the emotional tone of a story is by setting the scene with weather. Dark skies find the heroine weeping and sunny days finds her all smiles. Well, it seems as if there are a lot of dark skies for many of us these days. Our own household has recently struggled with the fact that there is no insurance coverage for our addicted son, forcing us to pay for his crisis dental surgery out of pocket. It breaks my heart to hear some of our public servants warn about the evils of "socialism" with regards to Obama's efforts to promote insurance for all Americans when these very same people have excellent insurance paid for by the U.S. Government. I am someone who lived for many years in Canada and was happy to pay high taxes for excellent health coverage. I recently worked with a family whose insured elderly mother waited 8 hours in one of our local ERs because the facility was crowded with uninsured persons having no where else to go for much needed care. Whoever came up with the notion that health care is a privilege and not a right is a Grinch.

Another cloud on our horizon is the fact that many of our addicted young people are caught in the revolving door of the American prison system. I was shocked to learn at the recent American Psychiatric Association meeting on May 21st that 2 /3 incarcerated persons in the United States are behind bars for "technical violations." That means that the individual did not reoffend against anyone, harm anyone or steal from someone. That means that the individual was placed back in prison because of his or her relapsing addictive illness or because of an administrative error (such as failure to show up for a parole hearing). Speaking of the APA, you would have been proud of our intrepid crew. Gretchen Burns-Bergman, Laura Thomas, Caroline Stewart, Ken Khoury, Rodrigo Munoz and Claudio Cabrejos did a Palinesque "SHOUT OUT" about the need for psychiatrists to challenge prison recidivism with more social justice action and patient

Continued on page 6

Executive Director's Message by Gretchen Burns Bergman

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

In April we celebrated the anniversary of A New PATH and a decade of dedication to reducing the stigma associated with addictive illness. With both pride and frustration, I look back on how we started this journey and all of the stumbling blocks along the way. Our goal was to correct misconceptions about the disease of addiction in order to change harmful drug policies. We began with a small band of parents that soon became a large group of committed advocates. We believed that as parents we had inside knowledge of both addictive illness and the devastation to the addicted individual and their families of misguided punitive policies, so we began by speaking out to as many audiences as possible. It is amazing, not just that we actually created this organization, but that we have been able to sustain its growth for 10+ years, especially considering the controversy this subject provokes. The good news is that people are actually talking about addiction now, a subject that had been hidden under layers of perceived shame and prejudice.

A dozen years ago I began dreaming about starting this organization. I remember going to a parent support group in such emotional pain over my older son's drug addiction and incarceration, that I felt like my insides were full of broken glass. I had the vision that if I opened my mouth to speak I might bleed to death in the unleashed flood. That support group helped me to navigate the roller coaster of emotions, and to honor my own sanity and survival. This was before I knew that my second son also had addictive illness and before realizing that our story would continue to reach new levels of both turmoil and tolerance. In checking my own pulse these days, I guess I feel that my insides are filled with scars, rather than broken glass...still damaged, but not destroyed.

It was in those meeting rooms that I met Tom O'Donnell and Sylvia Liwerant, and together we three parents decided to speak truth to power and stigma. Before

Continued on page 3

July 2009

PATH Welcomes Your Involvement!

PATH holds semi-annual educational speaker meetings and seminars. 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.

Our Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at 6pm. 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 or PATH Ambassadors: 619-670-1184 or anewpath@cox.net.

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 AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH WITH SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

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 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. If you would like a copy, please send \$1 for mailing.

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 Network

**Alternative
News Sources**

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

www.anewpathsite.org
www.jointogether.org
www.narconews.com
www.drcnet.org
www.reconsider.org
www.drugpolicy.org
www.sdchip.org
www.centerforce.org

A New PATH 2009 Committees

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

- Executive (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer)
- Finance and Fundraising
- Membership
- PR/Publicity
- Education & Recovery
- Legislative & Prison Reform

Contact the office at 619-670-1184 or e-mail anewpath@cox.net to join a committee.

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 3600 people! Consider purchasing an ad for our April edition.

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

Our next printing deadline is June 30, 2009. 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!

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

Gretchen Burns Bergman, Managing Editor
Kathy Rezaei, Editor

A New PATH
2527 Doubletree Road
Spring Valley, CA 91978
Phone (619) 670-1184
E-mail gretanewpath@cox.net
Check our website at www.anewpathsite.org

© 2009 A New PATH. No portion of this newsletter may be reprinted without the written consent of A New PATH.

Please help Support our cause by Purchasing:

- 2009 Faces of Recovery Calendars Now on sale for \$5
 - "Givin' Somethin' Back" CDs by former inmate, Pierre Alexander \$10
 - Decade of Dedication CD of Southwestern Concert Choir (\$10)
 - Silver "PATH to Recovery" cause bracelets - 3 for \$10
 - Strut for Sobriety T-Shirts \$15 (Men's, Women's Med.)
 - An Inch from the Heart books of Found Poetry available for \$20 each.
 - "R"PATH to Recovery magnetic car stickers: 3 for \$5.
- Order through PATH office: 619-670-1184 or email: anewpath@cox.net.

If you would like us to mail any of these items, please add \$4.

July 2009

continued from page 1
Executive Director's Message

we began to form our non-profit organization, I had the letters PATH written over my desk, willing myself to begin to organize. I also considered starting a self help group PAT (**P**arents **w**ho **h**ave **b**een **A**bused **b**y **t**heir **T**eenagers), but decided to take the higher road towards creating social change through advocacy.

I am proud that we played an important part in changing public opinion, policies, and even laws regarding drugs. In 2000 I was honored to serve as State Chairperson for Proposition 36, and we were fortunate to be a part of this initiative process begun by the Campaign for New Drug Policies, and the resulting landmark legislation that mandates treatment to non-violent drug offenders. The timing was perfect, as so many families were grappling with not only addictive illness, but also incarceration, and our organization was fired up and speaking out for treatment in lieu of prison. As you may remember, Prop 36 passed in California in November 2000 by 61% of the voters, proving that people were ahead of politicians in realizing a need for therapeutic, rather than punitive drug policies. Since its implementation in 2001, over 36,000 people per year have accessed treatment instead of incarceration.

During the campaign my son was a non-violent drug offender serving time at Donovan State Prison. With his permission I told his story as an example of the need for a change in drug laws. Now, I have met several of his friends and many individuals who have achieved sobriety through Prop 36, which is so gratifying and fulfilling. My son also achieved sobriety over the years, but his experience in recycling through the prison system was damaging, and robbed him of more than a decade of his young life.

PATH continued to be involved in the implementation of Prop 36, and in defending and furthering its success. Each year we advocate for funding, but as our current economic crisis has worsened, treatment money has diminished, and now Prop 36 funding may disappear altogether. In it's 9th year of success, having saved over \$2 billion and treated well over 200,000 people, it may become an unfunded mandate, which is terribly disheartening.

While addiction remains our number one public health problem, treatment dollars are disappearing across the board. Court ordered treatment comprises a majority of treatment funding in California, making one wonder if you need to get arrested in order to receive services. But, even those treatment slots are going away, along with good facilities that can no longer afford to keep their doors open, despite the growing need for services.

In last November's election we suffered another setback when Prop 5 (Nonviolent Offender Rehabilitation Act) was defeated because of scare tactics from the prison guards union and the criminal justice system who saw it as a threat to their power and wealth.

But, perhaps things are darkest just before the dawn. Despite these steps backward, it seems that we are in a state of flux. We sense that something is shifting. When circumstances are at their worst there is the prospect of a pendulum swing for change. At all levels of society, in the media and in boardrooms across America, people are discussing new solutions to the "war on drugs".

Even the White House is promoting a policy of treatment instead of incarceration, as well as discussing harm reduction. And, the "L" word (legalization) has been put on the table by several decision makers as a possible aide in dealing with the economic crises, our nation's destructive policies of over-incarceration, and to ease the gang-land border violence of the drug wars.

With "change" being the mantra of the new administration, are we at the crux of new possibilities in bringing about therapeutic progress? As our advocacy efforts have taken us two steps forward and one step back, are we at a place in the pattern where we will take a big leap ahead? As we are approaching the year 2010, a full decade after the passage of Prop 36, can we hope for another surge forward in society's enlightenment in dealing with the profound public health problem of addiction? My shoes are laced up and I am ready to run into the new decade carrying such a message of hope and positive change.

All of Us or None – San Diego Presents ...

C L E A N S L A T E D A Y



SATURDAY
July 25th, 2009
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Have you been convicted of a felony?
Have you ever been in juvenile hall, jail, prison, or INs detention?
Have you been denied jobs, public housing or welfare due to a felony conviction?
Are you having a hard time starting over since your release from jail?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions you owe it to yourself to: **Free Legal Services – Private time with counsel if warranted:**

Record Expungement Clinic

8 Teen
Art & Culture Center
3925 Ohio Street
San Diego, CA 92104
619.288.4645

BRING YOUR RAP SHEET

For more information:

All of Us or None-San Diego

619.886.5454

allornonesd.org

www.AllofUSorNONE.org

Help A New PATH reduce Stigma 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.

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!

El Rincon De Claudio

El Abuso De Drogas La Atencion Primaria De Salud

La adicción a drogas es uno de los problemas más comunes que encuentran los médicos generales en las clínicas de atención primaria. En los Estados Unidos el 18% de la población tiene un diagnóstico de abuso de drogas en algún punto de su vida. En clínicas de atención primaria, aproximadamente el 20% de los pacientes está usando alguna droga en el presente, y en clínicas psiquiátricas el 35%. Además, el 28% de los adultos tiene un excesivo uso de alcohol y el 8% usa drogas ilícitamente. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recomienda el despistaje e intervenciones de comportamiento para reducir el mal uso de alcohol en adultos incluyendo a mujeres gestantes, en clínicas de atención primaria. De hecho, estas intervenciones están listadas entre las más eficientes y costo efectivas junto, por ejemplo, a profilaxis con aspirina, despistaje de cáncer colon-rectal y vacunas contra el pneumococco.

Como cualquier condición crónica, la dependencia a drogas tiene determinantes genéticos y ambientales, con cambios fisiológicos crónicos, un curso fluctuante con enfermedades médicas y psiquiátricas asociadas. Es por eso que existe la necesidad de integrar el despistaje del abuso de drogas en clínicas de atención primaria de salud. Actualmente hay una coordinación muy limitada entre el cuidado médico, salud mental y tratamiento de adicciones, con un tratamiento muy variado a las enfermedades asociadas a corto y largo plazo y a las intervenciones especializadas necesarias. Existen muchas "barreras" para integrar el cuidado de salud físico y mental, entre estas tenemos las características propias del paciente como sus actitudes, creencias, motivación, ocupación, familia y condiciones psiquiátricas asociadas y las características de nuestro sistema de salud tales como los seguros que pagan o no los servicios requeridos con una separación de los diferentes sistemas y servicios.

Claudio Cabrejos MD MPH

Certified, American Board of Addiction Psychiatry

States Waste Billions Dealing with Consequences of Addiction, CASA Study Says

May 28, 2009 **News Summary** (Excerpt)

The vast majority of the estimated \$467.7 billion in substance-abuse related spending by governments on substance-abuse problems went to deal with the consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, not treatment and prevention, according to a new report from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.

The report, titled, "Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets," found that 95 percent of the \$373.9 billion spent by the federal government and states went to paying for the societal and personal damage caused by alcohol and other drug use; the calculation included crime, health care costs, child abuse, domestic violence, homelessness and other consequences of tobacco, alcohol and illegal and prescription drug abuse and addiction.

Just 1.9 percent went to treatment and prevention, while 0.4 percent was spent on research, 1.4 percent went towards

A New PATH

taxation and regulation, and 0.7 percent went to interdiction. "Such upside-down-cake public policy is unconscionable," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA's founder and chairman. "It's past time for this fiscal and human waste to end."

Cigarettes Becoming More Deadly, Scientist Says

May 11, 2009 **News Summary** (Excerpt)

A leading tobacco researcher says that preliminary data indicates that cigarette smokers face up to twice the risk of developing cancer than they did in the 1960s, the New York Times reported May 6. David M. Burns, M.D., said that even today's so-called "low-tar" and "low-nicotine" cigarettes may be more hazardous than those used by earlier generations of smokers, according to data from an as-yet unpublished study.

Presenting his findings at a recent meeting of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco, Burns said the difference may be that modern methods of curing tobacco — with nitrogen fertilizers and propane heaters rather than in the open air — increase the level of carcinogens called nitrosamines in tobacco products. The rate of the most common form of lung cancer among American men is higher than for male smokers in Australia, where tobacco is still air-cured.

Did you know?

- Approximately 70 people per day die due to accidental overdose. Rep. Donna F. Edwards (D-MD) has introduced a bill that would give public health professionals more power to prevent overdose. The Drug Overdose Reduction Act would increase access to medications like naloxone, which can stop overdoses before they are fatal. A New PATH supports this lifesaving policy. Drug use must be handled as a public health issue, rather than a criminal justice issue.

- Although the governor has claimed he may have to release inmates, his budget for 2009-2010 does not reflect it. The budget for Corrections actually increases by 4 billion dollars when the AB900 obligation bonds are added to money from the general fund. Corrections budget increases to \$14.4 billion dollars and inmate per year cost rise to \$52,000 dollars. (Information from Frank Courser)

www.ebudget.ca.gov/StateAgencyBudgets/5210/agency.html

We need you!

Please volunteer to join PATH 's Finance Committee!

Supporting A New PATH's ever growing projects requires a committee of volunteers to strategize for our financial future. If you are interested in joining the committee e-mail:

anewpath@cox.net Thank You!



A New PATH encourages you to attend this conference. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about drug policy and to strategize for reform.

Info: **www.drugpolicyevent.org**.

Dan Walters: Costly prisons a good place for overhaul

dwalters@sacbee.com - Monday, Jun. 29, 2009 - (excerpt)

California's cost of guarding, feeding, clothing, medicating and supposedly educating its nearly 170,000 prison inmates and supervising 110,000 parolees is about \$10 billion a year. And it's very easily the fastest-growing segment of the deficit-ridden state budget over the past decade.

It is, by a very wide margin, the costliest prison system among the largest states, with a per-inmate cost that prison officials tag at around \$45,000 a year, roughly what it costs to send a youngster to one of the more prestigious private universities.

The average among the nation's 10 most populous states, according to one recent calculation, is \$27,237 per year per inmate, including states with substantially higher incarceration rates, such as Texas. Therefore, prisons consume a much-higher portion of California's general fund budget than those of other states – more than 10 percent.



Prison Overcrowding



Spotlight on Unsung Heroes

Caroline Stewart, L.C.S.W.



Sustaining the growth of A New PATH and its multiplying projects wouldn't have been possible without the energy and enthusiasm of a very special person, Board President Caroline Stewart. She has made a major commitment to PATH's mission, to reducing the harms of addictive illness, and to developing and maintaining an excellent Board of Directors. Kudos to Caroline, whose virtues, talent, humanity and humor are greatly valued and appreciated.

PATH Suggested Reading:

- Comeback***, by Claire & Mia Fontaine
- Discovering Me, Discovering Joy***, by Vivian Eisenecher
- Moments of Clarity***, by Christopher Kennedy Lawford
- Tweak***, by Nic Sheff
- The Addict***, by Dr. Michael Stein
- Tell Me No. I Dare You!***, by Scott Silverman
- Second Chances*** by Gary Stromberg

A New PATH

Letter to Editor:

Dear Friends at A New PATH,

I've been a member for some years. I haven't had a chance to say 'thank you' for all the inspiring and insightful articles in the newsletter or to come to the Strut or other events. I want you all to know that while I haven't been able to do more your efforts have provided much valuable information and even more valuable consolation and hope... know that there is someone out there who really knows what you have all been through and feels like a sister to you all.

With sincere gratitude,
Cheri Erickson Smith

***THE SOCIAL WORLD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:
HOW IT WORKS***

A study of the impact of social interaction processes on recovery

Annette R. Smith, Ph.D.

With an introduction by Linda Farris Kurtz, DPA.

COMMENTS ABOUT THE BOOK:

"With astute application of sociological concepts, Annette Smith unravels the processes by which Alcoholics Anonymous is successful in assisting alcohol-dependent men and women to become long-term sober citizens. Dr. Smith's careful qualitative research, based on personal interviews with A.A. members, captures the nuances of the self-transformation that occurs over time."...JACQUELINE P. WISEMAN, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology Emeritus, UCSD; author of the award-winning *STATIONS OF THE LOST: THE TREATMENT OF SKID ROW ALCOHOLICS..*

" Annette Smith holds a place on my short shelf of social scientists with a deep and nuanced knowledge of A.A. ...ERNEST KURTZ, Ph.D., author of *NOT GOD: A HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.*

" This book can provide a magnificent introduction to A.A. for the serious student or counselor dedicated to an in-depth understanding of 'how it works.' At the same time, *Social World* offers a wealth of insights to established researchers and scholars. A great read!"...PAUL M. ROMAN, Ph.D., Distinguished Research Professor and Director of the Center for Research on Behavioral Health and Human Service Delivery, University of Georgia.

ISBN: 978-0-595-47692-3 (pbk), 2007 iUniverse, Inc. 1(800)288-4677. Book may be ordered from the publisher, through booksellers or online at www.amazon.com. Discounts for non-profit and government organizations.

You can help support A New PATH

every Time you shop

Please register your Ralphs club card online at www.ralphs.com/ Using A New PATH and NPO # "90278" and every time you shop and swipe your card/ PATH will automatically earn a rebate. You can also contribute to New PATH through Food 4 Less: www.food4less.net Please call the PATH office if you need help in setting this up at: **619-670-1184**

Thank you for your ongoing support !

Continued from page 1
Postcard from the Prez.

advocacy to stop the inhumanity of revolving door imprisonment. If I do say so myself, we six were a “mean presenting machine.” However, please do not ask me about my power point skills...

I am sorry to be on such a negative role, but the skies are weeping with rain over the Governor's budget proposal, which would turn off funding for Prop 36 nonviolent offenders. I count myself blessed to currently have my favorite nephew in treatment because of this wonderful legislation. It is always such an honor to learn about the high degree of efficacy of this program from our own soulful Margaret Sammuli-Dooley of the DPA. It was especially great to talk with Margaret at the Training for the Trainers Day (teaching drug and alcohol counselors and lay people how to talk about the scientific basis of addictive illness) on May 9th, so graciously co-sponsored by Stepping Stone and our champion, John de Miranda.

In closing, I want to thank my Starbucks family for your abiding daily support of A New PATH and its mission. (However, please don't tell my husband that you see me that often.) Thank you Kathy for buying me a cup of coffee a few weeks ago when I only had money for the paper and for becoming an attorney later in life to promote social justice. Thank you, Joe, for your unabashed support of the little guy and your broad knowledge of American politics. You have the cutest car in the whole world (a BMW Isetta). Thank you Justin H. for offering to teach me to play golf to cheer me up after being crushed by a trash can. I am told that you have played with the best of the best (and we all know who that is). Thank you Cindy D. for your dedication to women's health as the Medical Director of Planned Parenthood and for your abiding concern for your patients and for all who suffer...even those struggling with drug addiction. Thank you Bill G. for being an all-around mensch and for representing the very best of San Diego.

Hoping that the next few months bring all of us sunny skies and 80 degree ocean water... Caroline

Poll: Americans Want Addiction Treatment in Healthcare Reform

June 17, 2009 – News Summary – Join Together Online

Almost three-quarters of Americans support including alcohol and other drug treatment in national healthcare reform to make it more affordable, and two-thirds of survey participants (68 percent) support increasing the amount of federal and state funding for preventing and treating addiction, according to a new poll by the Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG) initiative.

The study also found that three-quarters of Americans (75 percent) are concerned that people with addictions may not be able to afford treatment because of their lack of insurance or finances. “The facts support this concern,” said Victor Capoccia, CATG's director. “We are treating just 10 percent of the 23 million people in the United States who need addiction treatment.”

Regardless of age, race, income or residence, 76 percent of Americans know someone who has been addicted to alcohol or drugs, the researchers found. The survey was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,001 adults ages 18 and older. The CATG initiative seeks to ensure that quality services are available to all who need alcohol or other drug addiction treatment.

A New PATH

Challenge to Calif.'s Medical Marijuana Law Defeated

May 20, 2009 News Summary

The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected without comment a challenge to California's Proposition 215 filed by a pair of counties, the San Francisco Chronicle reported May 19. The high court rejected a case filed by San Diego and San Bernadino counties centering on the argument that the medical-marijuana law forced the counties to endorse violations of federal drug laws by issuing identification cards to medical users. The cards are intended to prevent state-sanctioned medical users from being prosecuted on drug charges by state and local police; the two counties have refused to issue the medical-marijuana IDs.

California grants early release of parole violators

Dealing with overcrowding and fiscal constraints, officials have set free some inmates and approved early release for others.

By Michael Rothfeld – 7/ 9/09
Los Angeles Times - Excerpt

Reporting from Sacramento — California prison officials, facing severe overcrowding and a financial crisis, have been granting early releases to inmates serving time for parole violations.

State officials said the dozens of prisoners set free from the California Institution for Men in Chino and from lockups in San Diego and Shasta counties had 60 days or less left on their terms, or had been accused of violations and were awaiting hearings. The releases were approved by the state parole board.

At least 89 inmates have been freed or approved for early release during the last two months. Others have been sent to home detention, drug rehabilitation programs or similar alternative punishments. They were screened to ensure that they had never been convicted of the most serious crimes, such as murder, manslaughter, kidnapping or sexual offenses, the officials said. The inmates may have been convicted of grand theft, weapons possession, driving under the influence of alcohol or other crimes. Their parole may have been revoked for missing an appointment with a parole agent, failing a drug test, committing robbery or any number of other offenses.

The move came as county authorities in Los Angeles and elsewhere said they could no longer house — and in some cases, threatened to release — inmates awaiting transfer to state prisons from their own teeming jails. Counties routinely hold newly convicted prisoners or those picked up on parole violations until the state can take them.

But California's \$26.3-billion deficit has left the state without enough money to pay for all of those its laws designate for punishment. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and lawmakers are considering numerous ways, including the early release of inmates, to save money by reducing a prison population of nearly 170,000...

From The Inside

By: David Beck-Brown

Got Huevos?



Exhibit # 1: First in a Series

Homework: *1. Google The Bill of Rights.*

2. Memorize Amendments

42 & # 8 to be continued...

www.Davidbeck-brown.com

(Works In Prison)

Letter to Testify Before State Senate & Assembly Budget Committees

From: Gretchen Burns Bergman, A New PATH – 5/27/09

I am writing to urge you to continue funding for Proposition 36, which mandates treatment in lieu of incarceration for non-violent drug offenders. I understand that Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed eliminating funding for this successful program which has provided community-based treatment to 36,000 people per year since the law was first implemented in California in July of 2001.

It would be a terrible mistake to eliminate this funding, both economically and in terms of human lives. Treatment instead of incarceration has proven to reduce costs and improve public safety. Besides saving over \$2 billion Prop 36 has provided much needed substance abuse treatment to individuals with addictive disease, over half of whom had never received treatment before. Families have been reunited, and we have been able to reduce recidivism.

We must not return to the failed policies of the past. I served as State Chairperson for Proposition 36 in 2000. My son was incarcerated at the time and was re-cycling through the system for years for non-violent drug possession offenses. He is a drug addict (now in recovery), who cost the taxpayers an incredible amount of money on incarceration, which was pointless and merely exacerbated the problem. What he needed was substance abuse treatment. There was also tremendous physical and emotional damage caused by this misguided policy to him and to our family.

A New PATH is a non-profit advocacy organization that was instrumental to the passage of Prop 36 and continues to be involved in the successful implementation of this landmark law. Unfortunately, the funding has been decreasing, which threatens the effectiveness of the program. The Governor's proposal would do away with funding and treatment, but it wouldn't change the mandate for treatment instead of incarceration. It would abandon people who need treatment services in order to manage their disease, change their lives and become productive members of society.



Join A New PATH on the catwalk for the 5th annual celebration of recovery from substance abuse and addiction, *Strut for Sobriety!* on Saturday, September 19, 2009 from 10am-3pm at the Westin Gaslamp Quarter.

This unique event, co-chaired by **Connie Conard** and **Colleen Ruis Jackson**, will feature a silent auction and boutique at 10:00am, followed by a luncheon, awards ceremony, entertainment and fashion show. The Celebrity Honorary Chair is radio personality **Little Tommy Sablan** of Star 94.1 FM, and **Susie Spanos** will serve as Honorary Chair. **Carol LeBeau** and **Geni Cavitt**, will serve as the celebrity emcees, and **Joe Bauer** is the auctioneer.

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 with "Path to Recovery" awards. An entertaining fashion show, produced by **Gretchen Productions** will feature fashions from **Macy's Horton Plaza**, worn by professional models as well as guest models in recovery. **Virginia Napierskie** is the generous Amethyst sponsor, **Priscilla Webb** is Turquoise sponsor, and **Linda Marteeny** is the Opal sponsor.

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.

Topaz runway tables of 10 are \$1200 and individual tickets are \$75 each.

For ticket information or to schedule an interview, please contact PATH at 619-670-1184

Email: anewpath@cox.net website: www.anewpathsite.org

continued from page 7 Letter to Testify...

Several solutions that would protect Proposition 36 have been suggested, such as applying federal stimulus dollars to Prop 36 through the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant. The money that is saved by treating (approx \$4000 annually) instead of incarceration (approx. \$49,000 annually) should be reinvested in Prop 36 treatment. We need to eliminate parole for drug possession (estimated \$135 million annually), and reduce the prison population by early release of non-violent drug offenders currently behind bars. There are also other suggestions on the table such as an alcohol excise fee that could raise revenues for drug treatment. These are all positive solutions.

Drug addiction is our number one public health problem. One in four families deals directly with the disease. Unfortunately a growing number of families are also dealing with a family member behind bars because of addiction. This damages the whole community. Since my son was in prison, many of his friends have

A New PATH

received treatment through Prop 36, and I have met so many Prop 36 graduates who have reclaimed their lives, reunited with their families, returned to work, and become contributing citizens. I implore you to continue funding for Prop 36 and to continue to build on positive and therapeutic solutions to the shared human problem of addiction.

Accountability in the state's prison system

By Jeanne Woodford – 5 /20/2009
reprint from Sign on San Diego

The election results are in, and California must now close a budget hole that's at \$21 billion and growing – or about 25 percent of state spending last year. This year every penny counts. The budget crisis makes it imperative that Sacramento implement significant reform of the \$10 billion-a-year California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

I spent my career in this state agency, watching and even aiding the bureaucracy to grow into the ineffective behemoth it is today. Like all other corrections secretaries, I did so with the best of intentions – to make California a safer place. Yet good public safety policy has not followed growth. I believe strongly that the answer is accountability in our corrections system. Only when the Legislature holds the department accountable will we see a change in the wasteful practices and policies of that department.

Corrections and Rehabilitation must be asked to justify every dollar it spends – and to justify the impact that those spending decisions have on recidivism and public safety.

Consider the growth: Corrections and Rehabilitation headquarters staff has grown by 25 percent to 33 percent in just the last three years, expanding into 17 separate office spaces in Sacramento. Nearly 300 of those staff members, for example, are overseeing contracts on – not providing direct services for – just 9,500 prison treatment beds and a small number of beds in the community.

In 2000, taxpayers spent \$4 billion on the prison system. By 2008, the Legislature had budgeted \$10 billion for the prison system – and subsequently approved the transfer of hundreds of millions of additional taxpayer dollars to cover department overspending.

This top-heavy department is bloated and unwieldy, generating significant waste. To his credit, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger recently proposed cutting Corrections and Rehabilitation staff by 3,600. These layoffs, though devastating for staff and their families, are needed and provide the department with an excellent opportunity to make strategic cuts aimed at removing redundancy and inefficiency. Unfortunately, Corrections and Rehabilitation has issued pink slips to the least senior – not the least necessary – staff, ensuring only more dysfunction and waste.

More and bigger strategic cuts are needed. According to a recent state auditor's report, the department paid \$1.3 million for time that three employees spent working on union activities and spent another \$580,000 to lease office space that went unused. Just these two examples amount to about \$2 million, the cost of providing probation-supervised drug treatment in the community to about 400 people.

Continued from page 8
Accountability in state's prison system

This waste is peanuts compared with the cost – in dollars and public safety – of the department's ineffective policies. The Corrections and Rehabilitation releases 10,000 offenders back into California communities every month. All of them are technically under supervision, but parole officers have heavy caseloads and few resources.

The state's recidivism rate, at 70 percent, is the highest in the nation. The overwhelming volume of people coming back to prison from parole has encouraged the circumvention of court proceedings. New offenses are often treated as parole violations, making being on parole the best time to commit a crime, according to many offenders. The average prison stay for a parole violation is just four months. This revolving door has contributed to crime in our state.

It is easy to get angry at this incompetence and miss the real problem: lack of accountability. Several California governors and legislatures, and the voters, have created the state's dysfunctional criminal justice policies and are responsible for funding rampant expansion of Corrections and Rehabilitation bureaucracy. The Legislature has passed budgets and laws – with the best of intentions – aimed at changing Corrections and Rehabilitation, particularly by investing more in rehabilitation programs. But over and over again, Sacramento has failed to hold the department accountable for the reform it has legislated.

As a result, Corrections and Rehabilitation has redirected millions of dollars intended for rehabilitation toward headquarters staff and overtime for correctional officers. For example, the department has created only 25 women's re-entry beds under a legislative directive that required the department to create 500 such beds. The Senate Rules Committee was told that the funding must be used for overtime instead. Our Legislature must not let Corrections and Rehabilitation – or any other government agency – redirect taxpayer dollars willy-nilly.

Without being held accountable, the Corrections and Rehabilitation will remain a huge bureaucracy that fails to make California safer. We can no longer afford waste and inefficiency. Now is the time to demand greater department transparency, public reporting and outcome measures. Our public safety depends upon it.

Woodford is former warden of San Quentin and former acting director of the Department of Corrections.

Schwarzenegger: Let's Debate Marijuana Legalization

May 11, 2009 **News Summary** – Join Together Online

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said that he is "for an open debate" on the question of whether marijuana should be legalized, taxed and regulated in order to generate revenue for the state, the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) reported May 6. "I think it's time for debate," said Schwarzenegger, who did not endorse legalization. "I think all of those ideas of creating extra revenues — I'm always for an open debate on it."

Schwarzenegger's comments came after a new poll showed — for the first time — that a majority (56 percent) of Californians favor legalizing marijuana for recreational use. The drug already is legal for medical use in the state. A recent national poll also found that 46 percent of Americans support legalization of small amounts of marijuana for personal use.

State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano has introduced legislation that would legalize marijuana and impose a \$50-per-ounce state tax on the drug, saying that the measure would raise up to \$1.3 billion for the state annually. Ammiano praised Schwarzenegger for being "open-minded" toward the proposal. "This has never just been about money," said Ammiano. "It's also about the failure of the war on drugs and implementing a more enlightened policy. I've always anticipated that there could be a perfect storm of political will and public support, and obviously the federal policies are leaning more toward states' rights."



888.481.4481 . WWW.CASAPALMERA.COM



Help us to Celebrate Recovery by ordering your PATH to Recovery magnetic "R" ribbons and placing them on your cars and refrigerators, or anywhere visible to help to reduce the stigma and show the world that you support Recovery from addictive illness.

They are available through the PATH office for \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

Study could ease concerns over hiring ex-offenders

By Kevin Johnson, USA TODAY – July 2, 2009

A study funded by the Justice Department concludes that over time accused robbers, burglars and batterers pose no greater risk to employers than job candidates in the general population. In a review of 88,000 arrestees in New York state, Carnegie Mellon University investigators found, for example, that after about 7 1/2 years the “hazard rate” for an 18-year-old first-time arrestee for robbery declined to the same rate as an 18-year-old in the general population. For 18-year-olds arrested for aggravated assault, it took about four years to reduce the risk.

Hazard rates are calculated based on the time the suspect remains free from re-arrest. The calculation also accounts for the fact that risk of arrest generally declines with age. “We believe that our analysis provides the criminal justice community with the first scientific method for estimating how long is long enough for someone with a prior record” to no longer be considered a special risk, according to the study authored by Carnegie Mellon criminologist Alfred Blumstein <<http://content.usatoday.com/topics/topic/Alfred+Blumstein>>

Blumstein and other criminal justice analysts say the ongoing research could ease employers’ concerns about hiring former offenders and perhaps spark new legislative proposals to limit the liability for employers who do hire them.

With more than 600,000 people expected to be released from prisons this year and entering the turbulent U.S. labor market, some criminal justice analysts say the research marks an important step to changing the perception that the criminal justice system is a revolving door...

“People are finally starting to get it. They would rather see people working, than to shut people out,” says Veronica Ballard, a vice president of the Safer Foundation, which helps ex-offenders find work. Rep. Danny Davis, D-Ill., a sponsor of the Second Chance Act legislation designed to re-integrate offenders back into society, says any measure that might encourage potential employers to hire ex-offenders is a “powerful” tool

Wounds of War: Drug Problems Among Iraq, Afghan Vets Could Dwarf Vietnam

June 15, 2009 **News Feature** By Bob Curley

The U.S. could face a wave of addiction and mental-health problems among returning veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars greater than that resulting from the Vietnam War, according to experts at the recent Wounds of War conference sponsored by the National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University (Join Together is a project of CASA).

Rather than the heroin addictions many Vietnam veterans brought back with them from Southeast Asia, however, today’s returning soldiers are more likely to be addicted to prescription medications — the very opiates prescribed to them by the military to ease stress or pain — or stimulants used by soldiers to remain alert in combat situations.

“I think there’s a lot more [soldiers addicted to] pharmacological opiates than the data show,” said John A. Renner Jr., M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine and associate chief of psychiatry at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Boston Healthcare System. “A lot of them were using opiates before they went, and a lot are reporting that opiates are freely available in combat areas.”

Nora Volkow, M.D., director of the National Institute on Drug

Abuse (NIDA), noted that while many soldiers receive prescription opiates for traumatic injuries and pain, the drugs also are effective in relieving stress. “So, even if you don’t take it for that, it will work,” she said.

Prescription drug abuse may be a top concern among conference participants, but experts noted that excessive drinking remains a huge problem among soldiers, sailors and airmen despite being banned from combat zones in Muslim countries...

17 States Give Anti-Overdose Drug to Addicts

June 4, 2009 **News Summary**

A pioneering Chicago program that allows opiate addicts and their friends to administer the anti-overdose medication naloxone to those in distress has been replicated in 17 states, Time magazine reported May 29. The Chicago Recovery Alliance has distributed more than 11,000 anti-overdose kits through needle-exchange programs and other sites. In at least 1,000 instances, friends and fellow drug users have administered naloxone (Narcan) to overdosing opiate users, saving hundreds of lives, according to Chicago Recovery Alliance head Dan Bigg.

Narcan is commonly used in emergency rooms and by EMTs to stop overdoses in progress, but distributing the drug to addicts allows for a faster response to a crisis and helps avoid the situation where users are afraid to call for help because they don’t want to be arrested for drug use.

Project Lazarus in North Carolina is one example of the naloxone-distribution campaigns being developed nationally. Such programs now exist in at least 17 states as well as the cities of New York, Baltimore, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago.

Some critics say that naloxone programs encourage drug use, but to date the projects have not run into as much resistance as needle exchanges have. “I think people who study it up close realize that you could not have a purer case of a chance for life versus the risk of death,” said Bigg. Naloxone is considered a very safe drug, and recent research in the journal Addiction found that trained addicts administered the drug as effectively as medical professionals.

“We’ve got a medication that is incredibly effective at reversing overdoses,” said Wilson Compton, director of the Division of Epidemiological Services and Prevention Research for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. “It makes good logical sense. I wish we had a rigorous evaluation of the benefits and potential risks.”

Obama Puts Drug War Focus on Demand Reduction April 24, 2009 **News Summary** – Join Together Online

Recent comments by President Barack Obama and drug-czar nominee Gil Kerlikowske indicate that the War on Drugs could see a significant shift in focus from supply reduction to reducing demand by investing in more prevention and treatment, [CNN](#) reported April 18.

Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano have both indicated that the administration won't consider legalizing drugs, but Obama pledged in meetings with Mexican President Felipe Calderon to do more to cut U.S. demand for drugs being smuggled across the border with Mexico. "Demand for these drugs in the United States is what is helping to keep these cartels in business," said Obama. "Now, are we going to eliminate all drug flows? Are we going to eliminate all guns coming over the border? That's not a realistic objective," he said. "What is a realistic objective is to reduce it so significantly, so drastically that it becomes once again a localized criminal problem, as opposed to a major structural problem that threatens stability in communities along those borders."

Drug Czar Calls For Increased Focus On Treatment

6/24/2009- Copyright © 2009 RTTNews.com, Inc

The Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy called Wednesday for more attention on the treatment side of the nation's efforts to combat drug abuse. R. Gil Kerlikowske, the Drug Czar, said that the Obama administration was moving away from thinking about efforts to combat illegal drug use as a war.

"We are moving away from divisive 'drug war' rhetoric and focusing on employing all the tools at our disposal to get

help to those who need it," Kerlikowske said. "We recognize addiction is a disease and are seeking public health solutions.

My top priority is to intensify efforts to reduce the demand for drugs which fuels crime and violence around the world."

Kerlikowske, a former police chief in Seattle, said that he has seen the "terrible impact" that drugs have on families and communities. "The earlier we can intervene to get people help, the better," he said. "We will be expanding ... existing efforts and working to ensure drug treatment services are incorporated into our national health care reform process." He added, "Further, we will make sure those caught up in our criminal justice system due to their involvement in drugs will get the help they need."

The nation can no longer afford to simply throw addicts who commit crimes in jail, Kerlikowske said. "We must seize the opportunity to provide evidence-based treatment, either out of jail through diversionary programs like drug courts or while in jail, to set them on the path to recovery," he said. Kerlikowske also pledged to work internationally to stop the flow of drugs and to bring violent drug traffickers to justice, while also working to stop the flow of weapons to those criminals. "There is much to be done, but I believe we are on the right track with current and new initiatives to make the drug problem smaller for the United States and the world," he said.

Three Strikes Law Today

By Frank Courser, San Diego Chapter Families to Amend California's Three Strikes

Over the last 15 years many attempts have been made to amend California's Three Strikes Law. At least 12 different bills introduced by legislators and three different ballot initiatives. The most well remembered was Prop 66 which in just weeks before the elections was leading in the polls. At the eleventh hour former governor Pete Wilson phoned his friend Henry Nicholas to help defeat Prop 66. With an investment of 3.5 million dollars and plenty of media air time Prop 66 failed by a narrow margin. As they say the rest is history.

Once again we are attempting to right this injustice and fix what is rightfully called the toughest law in the nation. With the help of Families to Amend California's Three Strikes and other organizations we have begun writing a new initiative. Most of the language is based on past public polling and places limits on those that would be eligible for re-sentencing. The language is still not complete and moving forward will depend on producing an acceptable initiative our consultants think we can win with. We are also concerned about raising the enormous amounts of money it will take to place an initiative on the ballot. The goal will be to file it for the 2010 or 2012 elections cycles. We have been told to run a successful campaign we will need between 2 and 4 million dollars. There are many people working hard on this project and many volunteers that have given hundreds of hour of their time. We are hopeful we can once and for all end the injustice and are grateful to A New PATH for the many years of support.

Economy Having Impact On Patients Seeking Rehab

06/02/2009 - *KGTV-TV - Online*

SAN DIEGO — 'Carl' wants 10News to hide his identity but what he can't hide is why he is a patient at the McDonald Center at [Scripps](#) Hospital in La Jolla. 'I would sit down and knock back a pint of vodka in the morning,' said Carl. Carl would then have another pint in the evening, and this pattern continued off and on for years. One day Carl ended up at the McDonald Center where he received a scholarship so he could get and stay clean. 'It's a wonderful beginning; I'm so thankful,' said Carl. However, not all are as fortunate as Carl. 'I think patients are postponing or not getting treatment because of the economy,' said Dr. Fred Berger of the McDonald Center.

The center is seeing a 30 percent increase in patients seeking the three-day detox program. The number of patients seeking the long-term 28-day recovery program is down by about 40 percent. It is a nationwide trend that scares Berger 'The more time people are out there drinking heavily, shooting heroin, the more chances there are for bad things to occur,' said Berger. Berger said fewer patients are willing to spend the money on the 28-day recovery program, which can cost up to \$11,000. Insurance companies are not as willing to foot the bill these days either. 'They come in the other side of insurance companies, who say, 'We're not going to cover,' and that's kind of sad,' said Berger. Berger said it is sad because patients are not given the tools they need to recover in a three-day program.' It may work for a week or two but they're right here again,' said Berger. Carl said he is in this for the long haul.' It's a lifetime commitment; I take it one day at a time,' said Carl.

Bonjour Chibougamau: Notes on Seasonal Affective Disorder in the Far North

By Caroline Ridout Stewart – June 2009

I should have been alarmed in 1967 when my husband-to-be announced unexpectedly that he had decided to become an anthropologist instead of an attorney like his father. His announcement came at the end of a very pleasant Christmas party for multiple generations at the home of one of the Eastman girls (yes, I do mean “those” Eastmans, Kodak cameras etc.). Many of the invited guests were young people home to San Diego from their Eastern colleges and universities. I had had a glorious evening taking in the sights of what Kurt Vonnegut fondly calls the “fabulously well-to-do.” I could almost taste my future as a prominent attorney’s wife, hobnobbing with the in-crowd in my St John knit, taking little bites of toast rounds with caviar. How charming the repartee of the clever university crowd. I wasn’t even concerned at the close of the evening when my fiancé commented that a majority of the young men at the party were talking of plans to enter law school and that he found them shallow and self-centered. In fact, when he declared that he had made up his mind to apply to graduate school programs in Anthropology, I remained unconcerned because I thought that he had had too much champagne. I also have to admit that anthropology also sounded cool and glamorous as I imagined myself on safari in Kenya in my Ralph Lauren khaki vest. I was definitely not thinking about living with my husband in the northern climes of the subarctic. I doubt that anyone has ever worn a St. John knit in Chibougamau.

There is one solid truth about my husband that influences everything that happens to him and to anyone within his sphere. He is anxious about money; having money, spending money, distributing money. At age twenty, what did I know? As the product of a traditional 50s household with a patriarchal father and deferring mother, I knew absolutely nothing about money. Imagine how thrilled I was upon entering college in 1966 to receive my very own credit card in the mail without even asking for it! I believe that I was probably one of the first students in the United States to max out my brand new Bank Americard within three months (well, maybe six weeks) of arriving at college. It was sweet while it lasted and boy did I pick up some neat Bob Dylan albums. Needless to say, my father put the kibosh on any future credit card ownership.

Regarding my husband’s anxiety about money, that has everything to do with how he and I wound up living in Chibougamau, Quebec. Did I tell you that Chibougamau is a miniscule copper-mining town in the middle of the subarctic tundra at the tip of Hudson’s Bay? Life in Chibougamau is organized around snow-mobiling, moose hunting, ice hockey in the middle of the street and alcohol. Our anthropology mentors must have known what they were talking about when they proposed that the ideal field candidate for anthropology studies is a person with a high tolerance for booze and bugs. There were plenty of both in Chibougamau. From my husband’s point of view, it was an ideal site for the study of psychological shifts that occur in individuals experiencing culture shock. Chibougamau was populated by rural French-Canadian miners and their families and by indigenous Eastern Cree Indians whose two cultures melded in the frontier town environment. Better yet, it was probably the most distant ethnic outpost in North America approachable by car. This, of course, appealed to my husband who did not want to have to spend precious research money on airplane tickets.

A New PATH

Following two years of graduate training at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, my husband and I packed our little BMW 1600 car (affectionately called by my brother the “cartoon car.”) with all of our worldly possessions and our two cats, Eeyore and Tiger Mouse. Wanting to share the adventure, we invited my best friend, Gale, and her boyfriend, Eliot. In hindsight, bringing the friends along was probably not a good idea. The cats did okay because they were high on tranquilizers; if only the rest of us had been so sedated. Understandably, the car was cramped and Gale and Eliot and I had no idea what we were getting into. The trip through the beautiful forest of Lac Saint John and through the charming French Canadian town of Chicoutimi was lovely. The road had been freshly plowed of snow and the going was smooth. The little villages reminded me of mountain towns in Italy. I did begin to get a little anxious once we left the populated districts and traveled for mile after mile through dense scrub forest. I should have been more worried when we drove up to the guard house of Parc de Chibougamau. We could not enter the unpaved road through the regional park until we registered our car and ourselves before heading into the wild. “Why do we need to register before we enter the park?” I asked. To me, one registers to vote or to attend an academic conference.

It was around this time that Gale’s boyfriend, Benjamin, soon to depart for medical school in Puerto Rico, began to demonstrate an anxious tic-like snort that betrayed his loathing for our continued journey. I guess the fact that he challenged us to tell him why he should continue in a very angry voice also should also have been a cue. The fact is that the Parc de Chibougamau rangers were asking us to “register ourselves and our car” because the pending car trip through the unpaved, unpaved, rarely traveled road of one hundred miles was highly dangerous. I guess you also need to know that we were driving in what is called “white out” conditions in a two-wheel drive car with aging snow tires. Gale was appropriately annoyed with Benjamin for “acting like a baby” and challenged him to stop whining. Needless to say, her words did not serve to calm him down. His snorting tic increased in rate and loudness. I was fearful that he was going to have a stroke. Mile after mile, in midday total darkness our merry little crew wended its way to Chibougamau. We saw no moose, no car, no distant hills, no skiers, no hunters, nothing but snow flakes spewing towards us in the headlights for hour after hour. I think that the SADs (Seasonal Affective Disorder) first hit me when we arrived at the park exit only to discover that Gale had folded her gum into the park entrance pass. The ranger refused to allow us to proceed into town without the appropriate paperwork. Imagine our chagrin when the four of us had to sort through thirteen hours of trash to locate the essential pass into our new life.

I have failed to tell you that my beloved husband had already spent three months living alone in Chibougamau while I lived in Montreal and attended class. We had initially planned for me to remain in Montreal for an entire year of studies but as with one who sends her man off to war, I found that I could not bear to be apart. While my husband was busy introducing himself to the local Chibougamau inhabitants, I avoided working on my thesis by painting our Montreal kitchen apple green and chronically weeping. My own anthropological research into an urban “Jesus Freak” commune only served to further fuel my growing sense of anomie. How is a proper Episcopalian girl to understand speaking in tongues any-

12 way?

July 2009

The apartment that my husband had found for himself was not exactly cozy. It was a basement apartment with linoleum floors in a two story grey cement box that housed French Canadian miners. It was a very dark and dank little spot with a creaky double bed and a small table and two chairs. If suffering and deprivation are essential to the anthropologist's experience, my husband had outdone himself. As for we four car travelers, exhausted and irritable from hours of driving through a blizzard, we arrived at our little love nest longing for warmth and sleep. Imagine our surprise when Benjamin threw a tantrum stating that the cat had peed on his sleeping bag and that he would not spend one more minute subjecting himself to what he perceived to be outrageous discomfort. He insisted that he and Gale leave immediately for the return trip to the more cultured south. With not such fond adieus, we hugged our friends and said our "toute a l'heures" as they raced away eager to escape our godforsaken new home.

Perhaps my depression started when I awoke my first morning in Chibougamau with high fever, chills and disorientation. I was so ill that my husband hauled me to the local hospital ER where the male nurse asked my husband in a thick Quebecois accent, "C'est un gars ou une fille? (Is this a boy or a girl?) My Mia Farrow haircut was so plastered down from fever that I guess I did look like a boy. I was also wearing my brand new Canadian Air Force 'Women's Aviator Boots' and military parka. The era of sleek Northface down jackets and pastel Sorel snow boots was far in the future. The good news is that that very first day in Chibougamau I was too sick to be disappointed or shocked by my new surroundings. I spent the next few days in delirium oblivious to the world around me.

My first truly lucid take on my new hometown was that it was dark. Even on a day with no cloud cover, the winter light arrived at such a low angle that there was no perception of direct sunlight. It was twilight at high noon. On especially cold days (those with temperatures below minus 20 F), there was an additional oppressive aura in the town created by the local "habitation fog." Habitation fog is fog created by cars and human breath that snuggles close to the ground and further blocks what already limited sunlight there is. On a really good day in midwinter, Chibougamau had about three hours of fair to middling "sunlight." Even in high summer, the angle of the sun was so low in the sky that that there was no sensation of heat on one's skin. Sunbathing was out anyway because of hordes of ravenous "bibbits", small black biting bugs (also called 'no see ems) that left a petite blood blister on one's skin. The paucity of light hit my hibernating depressive genes like spring rain on desert seeds. My Scotch-Irish propensity for Seasonal Affective Disorder sat up and took notice.

It is argued that individuals with indigenous ethnic roots in low light geographic settings (such as persons with genetic links to Scandinavia, Siberia or Ireland) have powerful loading for mood disorders and co-morbidly linked alcoholism. Individuals with links to gene pools that lie upon the equator, such as the Italians or the Greeks, are said to have lower vulnerability to depressive illness and alcohol addiction. On the other hand, persons with genetic vulnerability to SADs experience the onset of depressive symptoms each calendar year as the earth tilts and receives less sunlight. Following a spring and summer of energy and goal-directed behavior, individuals with SADs find themselves losing

energy, feeling more anxious, distractible and unable to enjoy themselves. Even for those of us here in sunny Southern California, the diminishing sunlight of fall and winter resonates with our endogenous homeland roots. I am reminded of a visit I once made to my own psychiatrist's office when he reminded me in a bemused manner that he can predict my return to treatment like swallows returning to San Clemente, arriving back each year around mid October. I guess it takes a few weeks into the diminishing light of fall for my serotonin to subside.

In conclusion, there is no mystery in the fact that the most popular person in Chibougamau was the resident French Canadian social worker. She was the 'go to gal' when people fell into despair from too little to do, too little sunlight and too much whiskey. She was the first person I ever knew who wore a pager and it went off incessantly. She was quick to remind us that suicide was a popular and tragic escape route from the low light. Fortunately, neither my husband nor I ever succumbed to that level of despair. We survived our two years in the far north uplifted by Agatha Christie mysteries, Coffee Crisp candy bars, Molson's ale and the Canadian Public Radio program "As It Happens." Unlike our Chibougamau friends, we soothed ourselves with the vision of our return to Southern California and languid days lying on the beach in full sun. Bonjour Chibougamau. I will never forget you.

Cocaine Sentences Equalized

News Summary – June 26, 2009

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder called for an end to the gap between prison sentences for crack and powdered cocaine crimes at a recent legal discussion sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus, the [Washington Post](#) reported June 24. Under current federal law, it takes 100 times more powdered cocaine than crack cocaine to warrant the same mandatory minimum sentences. The gap affects African-American defendants the most since they are more likely to be arrested for offenses involving crack than powdered cocaine, according to federal crime statistics.

"This administration firmly believes that the disparity in crack and powdered cocaine sentences is unwarranted," said Holder. "It must be eliminated." The Obama administration wants to change the 100-to-1 ratio in sentencing to 1-to-1. Other lawmakers agree that the law should be changed, but some say it would be better to increase the penalty for powder cocaine and lower the penalty for crack cocaine.

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.

Our goal is to reduce prison recidivism, save lives, heal families, and move towards a healthier society.

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:

Alliance Healthcare Foundation
The California Endowment
Drug Policy Alliance
Join Together / Demand Treatment
Las Patronas
San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts
Sempra Energy
Faces & Voices of Recovery
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Price Galinson Collaborative Fund

For their generous grants and support!

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.



Non Profit Org
US Postage Paid
El Cajon, CA
Permit No 212

A New PATH
2527 Doubletree Road
Spring Valley, CA
91978