“Linking Together” in Prague

To encourage networking between Central, Eastern and Western European ATOD information specialists, the 12th annual ELISAD conference was held in Prague, Czech Republic with a theme of “Linking Together”. Approximately 30 persons attended this event including persons from Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, US and UK.

Hosted by Hana Sovinova, epidemiologist, and Head of the Department for Prevention on Addictions, Public Health Institute (CZ) and Chaired by ELISAD’s new chair, Lucia Bianco of Gruppo Abele, Torino, Italy,

(Continued on page 7)

Seasons Greetings and News From Home

The scholarship deadline is approaching for the SALIS 2001 Conference. Applications are due March 1, 2001. Information is available on the SALIS website at http://salis.org. The deadline for membership renewal for the 2001 calendar year is on January 31, 2001. Please renew by completing the membership application form, which is available at http://salis.org/ and from the SALIS home office. If you would like to request an application form or have any questions, email us at salis@arg.org. The deadline for submitting abstracts for the SALIS 2001 Conference has been extended. The final day that papers will be accepted is now January 12, 2001. The abstract submission form and call for papers are available at http://salis.org/.

SALIS Home Bids Another Farewell – Kristine Kwok, a graduating senior in social welfare at UC Berkeley, is retiring from her SALIS Home Admin Assistant position. Working for SALIS was more than a job to Kristine. She was highly motivated, organized, efficient and a pleasure to work with. But she is moving on to future endeavors with social work practice, and we must let her go. A big Thank-You for all that you’ve done, Kristine, from all of us at SALIS.

Introducing Erin Williams – Erin Williams received her training last month and is now working as the new SALIS Home Administrative Assistant. Erin is a recent graduate of UC Berkeley, and is actively involved in environmental issues concerning animal rights. To contact her with your SALIS questions: e-mail salis@arg.org.
News From Canada

Sheila Lacroix, Reference Librarian
CAMH Library, Toronto, Ontario

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1919-2000: A Legacy

As I paid my respects to Pierre Trudeau at the Ontario Legislative Building last fall, placing a rose by his photo and spending a few moments in quiet reflection, I felt part of a collective spirit that swept Canada when our former Prime Minister died. Looking around at my fellow mourners - young and old, male and female, well off and poor, and people from many different ethnic backgrounds - all waiting in line for his or her turn, it was obvious what this leader meant and still means to Canadians.

Pierre Trudeau, our Prime Minister throughout most of the years from 1968, when Trudeaumania swept the land, to 1984, was by far Canada's most popular Prime Minister. He was an exceptional leader: an intellectual, an outdoorsman, a world citizen, and a celebrity with a dramatic flair, who inspired Canadians to unite in embracing a 'Just Society'.

Trudeau is best known for his justice system and constitutional reform. Perhaps his most famous quote was made before he became Prime Minister, when, as Minister of Justice in 1967, in the midst of reforming the Criminal Code, he declared, 'There is no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation.' His government also abolished the death penalty in 1976. His greatest accomplishment for Canada was the patriation of the Constitution, formerly controlled by Britain, to which was added the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees to all Canadians political, legal, social and French-English-language rights.

Prevention and Health Promotion

Although much has been written and said about Trudeau over the past few months, rarely is mentioned the role he and his government played in the area of health promotion and the public health approach to substance-related problems. Some milestones are highlighted.

The Le Dain Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs

Commissioned in 1969 and completed in 1973, the comprehensive report generated by the Commission was a key policy background document instrumental to the direction Canada has been leaning towards in dealing with drug and alcohol-related issues, although many would argue, too reluctantly. Researchers and consultants from Canada and abroad were contracted, and the Canadian organizations and individuals that presented submissions represented every sector. It pulled together the current knowledge of psychoactive substances as well as the current situation in Canada; many recommendations were made, but the main thrust was the recommendation for a shift towards the non-coercive aspects of the social response drug use.

A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians: A Working Document

In 1974, Marc Lalonde, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Canada published yet another groundbreaking report, which recognized that medical care is only one part of maintaining and improving health. By studying causes and factors of sickness and death, four elements were defined: Human Biology, Environment, Lifestyle and Health Care Organization. These provided a framework for studying links between mortality and illness and their underlying causes. Increasing this understanding enables individuals, society and government to make judgements concerning choices. Seventy-four courses of action were recommended for the Health Promotion Strategy, some of which involved alcohol and other drugs, including the establishment of a National Drug Abuse Institute, and the promotion of employer programs for employees with alcohol problems.

Dr. H. Mahler, Director General of the WHO, highlighted this document in his opening address at the 1986 International Conference on Health Promotion in Industrialized Countries, at which the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion was launched.

Health Promotion Directorate

Canada was one of the first nations to set up a government body responsible for health promotion. In 1978, the Health Promotion Directorate was established.

Achieving Health for All by the Year 2000

Pierre Trudeau died in the year 2000. We face problems such as solvent and alcohol abuse among children in some of our Inuit communities in the North, as well as alarming rates of childhood obesity, as our society becomes more and more sedentary. However, celebrating the life of Pierre Trudeau, and (Continued on page 9)
Websights
Samantha Helfert, MLS, Row Sciences/ Federal Data Corporation Rockville, MD
Andrea Mitchell, MLS, Alcohol Research Group, Berkeley, CA

- A first time non-violent drug offender seen in a drug court is given an option for drug treatment instead of prison. Not only does this mitigate the consequences to the user, it also saves taxpayer dollars.

- Providing clean needles to drug users decreases the chances of spreading AIDS, and not just between drug users.

- Methadone maintenance helps people dependent on heroin to readjust to their lives, to enable them to work and live in more satisfying ways.

The above approaches to problems associated with drug dependence and use are examples of harm reduction strategies. The harm reduction approach generally refers to reducing the harms associated with drug use. Such issues as methadone maintenance, needle/syringe exchange and drug courts share common strategies, in that they reflect alternative approaches to drug policy and treatment that focus on minimizing the adverse effects of both drug use and drug prohibition. They also share pragmatic, humanistic notions of drug use, which are components of the harm reduction view.

It is important to note that harm reduction is an umbrella term covering a wide range of issues and policies. While the ultimate goal of those working in harm reduction is to lessen the harm associated with drug use, not all agree on the policies and means for accomplishing this agenda. In general, most harm reduction advocates promote the decriminalization, not the legalization of drug use. They argue that many of the criminal justice means of enforcing criminal justice policies, are a threat to some of our most basic constitutional rights, and even human rights. Some organizations believe drug courts provide an opportunity for drug treatment rather than incarceration. Others question the use of this strategy, which imposes treatment on individuals who may not need it, and often does not provide a choice in treatment modalities.

Some harm reduction strategies are considered controversial because they are perceived as being soft on crime and illegal drug use. Harm reductionists accept the practical notion that drug use will continue to occur despite its illegality and are not necessarily concerned with eradicating the use of illegal substances. Despite the approach's unpopularity with mainstream policy makers, harm reduction advocates continue to promote this alternative approach to addressing drug use.

The following are further examples of issues currently being addressed by harm reduction advocates:

The Reform Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Laws: During the 1970s and 1980s, Congress and many state legislatures passed mandatory minimum sentencing laws that force judges to hand out fixed sentences, without parole, to people convicted of certain crimes. Mandatory sentences must be imposed regardless of a person's role in the crime or other mitigating factors. Of the federal mandatory minimum sentences, only four are used with any regularity and apply exclusively to drug and weapon offenses. Advocates seek to reform these laws because they are concerned about the use of incarceration to address the drug problem and the disproportionate number of racial and ethnic minorities and women sentenced because of these laws.

The Reform of Civil Asset Forfeiture Policies: Civil asset forfeiture allows police to seize property in the absence of a criminal charge or the establishment of guilt if police believe they find any evidence of a drug-related crime. Advocates are concerned about this practice because the government can keep the property even if the owner has never been charged with a crime. Because police can often keep the property that is seized and sometimes rely on seizures for budgets, advocates are concerned with the possibilities for abuse. One step to reform Federal civil forfeiture law was the passage of the Civil Forfeiture Reform Act of 2000 which includes measures to safeguard an innocent owner's interest in property.

Advocate and Support Medical Marijuana Initiatives: Marijuana is known to be a pain mitigant for patients with AIDS, cancer, glaucoma, and multiple sclerosis. Yet current federal government policy disallows its use. To date, voters have approved medical marijuana by doctor's recommendation, through ballot initiatives in California, Arizona, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Colorado and the District of Columbia, and more than 20 state legislatures have enacted some form of medical marijuana legislation.

(Continued on page 8)


(Continued on page 5)
John Callahan, I Think I Was An Alcoholic.
Five minutes, 1993

Why am I reviewing a film from the last century? Basically, it's a cartoon, it's a hoot and it has an enduring message. Callahan's short animation based roughly on his life as an alcoholic, plays out to the glamour of a barrel house organ, the tune, "Ain't We Got Fun." Callahan has acquired a reputation, not undeserved, of being shocking. One has to admit there is a certain mood of sarcasm, bleak humor and just plain wicked fun in his work.

In this short piece he states "the first time I drank, I got drunk," and promptly fills up the dining room with vomit. He is not one to pull punches and some may find the grossness of some images a little too strong. Though the images are coarse the narrator's voice is cool and detached, as if describing the most ordinary experience.

He outlines his progress, drinking anything to get drunk and taking dangerous risks. He was in jail at seventeen and at twenty-one was paralyzed in a car crash where both he and his companion were drunk. Even after that in a nursing home, he continued to drink heavily and later, after being evicted, he and his alcoholic caregiver would drink together. All of these horrible consequences are presented with the same jittery and exaggerated sense of the ridiculous in his life, moderated with the perspective of time.

His moment of truth came, when alone, he dropped his bottle and was unable to retrieve it. He reports the raging anger and frustration that came out and how it motivated him to seek help. Now in sobriety he comments that his basic personality is much the same.

Who should see this film; should anyone see this film? It is a good discussion starter for dealing with issues around alcohol abuse with senior students and adults. Those who are well into their recovery would certainly appreciate the humor; it is a refreshing relief from the overly serious testimonials so frequently seen. Though it is clear that the help he got came in the form of an AA style self help group, it does not advocate for any specific therapy.

Who should not see this film? Certainly those who find Callahan's brand of humor offensive, there are many, may want to avert their eyes, and those in early recovery are not likely to benefit.

Distributors:
Pyramid Film and Video P.O. Box 1048
Santa Monica CA 90406
310-828-7577
800-421-2304

Periodical News

Errata: The Vol. 20 No. 3 issue had “Periodical News” listed on page 6 but ran “Periodical News” on page 5. Our apologies for the error.

Opioids and Opioid Receptors is the theme topic for a Special Issue of Journal of Biomedical Science. Vol 7 No 3, 2000. www.karger.com/journals/jbs

NEW BOOKS continued from page 4 . . .


(Continued on page 7)


Conference Update

Planning for the May conference is underway! Please make your plans on attending an exciting conference in Anchorage, Alaska, the last frontier. This year’s conference will focus on managing a special library and information service. Topics covered will be library program evaluation, information dissemination from a specialized collection, electronic revolution in medical and science publishing, web as a communication channel that appeals to youth, database for gathering statistics for libraries, collaborative treatment for co-occurring disorders, design of a virtual clearinghouse on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and American addiction literature 150 years, and many more. Hope to see you all!

this year’s forum was conducted entirely in English. In addition our hosts hospitality included a dinner in the Lichtenstein Palace, where we were presented with a sumptuous meal, in a most exquisite dining hall.

Responding to evaluations from last years meeting, the conference program had fewer didactic presentations, but offered one and a half days of workshops for practical training on building a web gateway, and building a website. The third workshop involved putting together the beginning draft of an ethics charter. Two of the (didactic) presentations were related topics of the workshops and according to the program agenda were meant as an introduction and perhaps some food for thought and guidance for the working groups. Elisabeth Lozano of the Canadian Center on Substance Abuse gave us an update on the ATOD Virtual Clearinghouse. (See SALIS News Vol 20 (2), 2000 pg. 7) Elizabeth is the new coordinator of the VC, and was especially concerned with involving more international partners in the effort.

My presentation concerned ethical dilemmas in libraries and was based on the American Libraries Association Code of Ethics. Josef Radimecky of the Czech National Drug Commission told the group about, “Changes in the Czech National Drug Policy”, and Katalin Szomor, Ministerial Chief Counselor, and National Phare drugs coordinator, Hungarian Ministry of Health detailed some of the training projects emanating from the Phare Multi-Beneficiary Fight Against Drug Abuse program, and more importantly for this venue, the development of the Phare Drug Information and Documentation System and the creation of the National Drug Library in Hungary under the Ministry of Welfare.

The business meeting concerned issues regarding creation of an institutional home, a revision of the ELISAD Constitution, and other general concerns of running the organization. New Board members were announced, and the ELISAD Website URL given http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/Villa/8980/.

ELISAD is considering the possibility of meeting with EAHIL, European Association of Health Librarians in 2001. Stay tuned for updates on the SALIS-List or at the ELISAD Website.
Establishment and Support Methadone Maintenance programs: Methadone maintenance is known to be effective and to reduce the risk of AIDS. In addition it provides a "critical focal point for risk reduction, and patient education, as well as counseling, testing and treatment of HIV disorders." Yet controversy in political arenas continue to make this humane treatment unavailable to many in need.

Establishment of Needle Exchange Programs: In spite of current evidence which supports the use and distribution of clean needles and syringes to prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases, in many states and federal legislation prohibits the operation of needle/syringe exchange programs. However, a growing number of states - including Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin - have created exceptions that make the availability of sterile syringes more of a reality. They have done this by allowing pharmacy sales, by decriminalizing the possession of a small number of syringes, or by allowing the establishment of legal needle exchange programs.

WEB RESOURCES
The Web provides a wealth of resources to learn about harm reduction strategies and approaches. Web resources are provided by advocacy organizations that are actively seeking to change policies and think-tank organizations that sponsor dialog and disseminate research on the policies. Because many organizations are working to promote change, their web sites provide legislative updates and current awareness features to facilitate involvement in the political process.

One of the leading drug policy organizations in the US, with a major focus on harm reduction strategies, is the New York-based Lindesmith Center (TLC). The TLC website (http://www.lindesmith.org) provides information on various harm reduction topics, including an online library of electronic documents organized by subject headings such as "harm reduction," "needle exchange," and "safer injection rooms." In addition the TLC library is searchable online and contains more than five thousand records of books, journal articles, reports, government documents and newspaper articles. In a section called "Focal Points" one can find brief essays on the harm reduction issues with links to full text materials, recent news items, and links to related resources. Within the "Cites and Sources: Initiatives and Legislation" covers criminal justice reforms, medical marijuana, needle exchange, and prohibitionist initiatives for various states. There is a brief summary for each state or federal issue, along with links to the full text of the bill or initiative. In "Cites and Sources: Polling" one can locate numerous attitude surveys on marijuana, needle exchange, other drug policy and treatment issues. In addition the site includes bibliographies, audio and video programs including material from the Shadow Conventions, as well as from the BBC British Broadcasting Corporation and NPR National Public Radio. In July 2000, The Lindesmith Center merged with the Drug Policy Foundation (DPF) (http://www.drugpolicy.org) a member-based group advocating for drug policy change. Plans to rename this new organization are underway.

The Drug Reform Coordination Network (DRC Net) (http://www.drcnet.org) was founded in 1993 and is a network of more than 10,000 activists and citizens concerned about drug policy reform from a variety of perspectives. DRC Net opposes the criminal justice mentality of the drug war, and supports rational policies consistent with principles of peace, justice and freedom. The web site focuses on the failure of the drug war and its impact on people in chronic pain, people of color, drug treatment, and children and teens. "The Week Online" provides news updates from around the world, and an Archive maintains them. There are short briefs on medical marijuana, needle exchange, methadone, etc.

To find news stories examining harm reduction issues, the Drug News Index at the Media Awareness Project (MAP) web site (http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/index.htm) is the place to go. MAP maintains a searchable database of over 48,000 full-text newspaper articles and editorials. The database is updated daily and its coverage includes both US and international stories. One can search the database by keyword or by selecting to view stories by Hot Topics. The Hot Topics not only include the broad categories, but also specific news stories of interest, like California's recently passed Proposition 36 initiative. Users can view the stories online, and can also select stories to be sent to their email addresses. MAP is a feature of DrugSense (http://www.drugsense.org/). DrugSense and MAP

(Continued on page 9)
seek to provide accurate information relevant to drug policy to raise awareness about alternatives to current drug policy efforts. To support its goals, DrugSense provides the option to sign up for state-specific mailing lists on drug policy reform and to receive once-a-week "Focus Alerts" that react to current news stories.

**Common Sense for Drug Policy** is a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding the discussion on drug policy by raising questions about existing law and educating the public about alternatives to current policies. They provide advice and technical assistance to individuals and organizations working to reform current policies. **Common Sense's** web site (http://www.csdp.org/) provides background information on specific harm reduction policies and strategies. One can find fact sheets with references on many issues from civil rights to assess forfeiture to drug courts. In addition, links are provided to organizations working on harm reduction issues. Not only are the links arranged according to issues, descriptions are included for each organization.

The above web resources provide information on a number of harm reduction issues and policies. There are also many smaller organizations working on specific issues with useful web sites. The **Marijuana Policy Project** (http://www.mpp.org) based in Washington DC, is a lobbying and advocacy organization working at both the state and national levels to reform "draconian" marijuana laws and to fight for new legislation to make marijuana safe and legal for patients. The web site provides current news updates on medical marijuana, and other issues related to the legal status of marijuana. This site is current, and offers a free e-mail update service. In addition under the heading, "Making Medical Marijuana Legally Available," there are fact sheets, briefing papers, state-by-state medical marijuana laws, and a section called "$\text{Responses to Anti-Medical Marijuana Arguments.}"

**The Sentencing Project** (http://sentencingproject.org/) was established in 1986 and provides technical assistance and policy analysis on criminal justice reform and alternative sentencing programs. The Project addresses criminal justice issues, including those related to the mandatory sentences of drug offenders. One can find reports on a array of sentencing issues, racial disparity concern in sentencing, "3 strikes and you're out" policy, and the issue of prosecuting juveniles as adults. In addition to providing information on its publications, the web site includes information on the National Association of Sentencing Advocates, a professional membership organization of sentencing advocates and defense-based mitigation specialists.

While the Sentencing Project focuses on policy analysis, there are many other advocate organizations working to rally citizens to change policy. One such is the member-based national organization, **Families Against Mandatory Minimums** (http://www.famm.org/), which was formed in 1991 to work to repeal federal and state mandatory sentencing laws that remove judicial discretion. FAMM educates the public and policymakers about mandatory sentences through media outreach, grassroots campaigns, and direct action. FAMM's web site provides current news and background information on federal and state mandatory minimum laws. Also included is a compilation of quotes from judges who have issued dissenting opinions to the laws.


Originally prepared in October 2000 for WebWatch, Journal of Addictions Nursing, forthcoming. This column was updated in December 2000.

Membership renewal deadline is approaching!
Please renew your membership by January 31, 2001. For other important reminders, please see page one.

**NEWS FROM CANADA continued from page 2...**

the accomplishments of his government in health and justice, has revitalized many of us, as we revisit the advances of this progressive, exciting era and prepare ourselves to move forward, building on the past.
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