Faces from the Library
“A Plea for Dilution”: Tracking Down a Federal Alcohol Poisoning Program
Judit H. Ward, Rutgers

This particular library patron was not driving to the library, which is not unheard of in an institution facilitating treatment of substance abuse. We are here to help, regardless. Interested in a historical theme, he had expressed his wish to consult on early 20th century alcohol history, my favorite topic. I was glad to schedule the research consultation. The big surprise came when he entered my office, decorated with the relics of alcohol history saved from the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies Library: he did not have a driver’s license because he was only 15 years old.

Matthew Rossi is currently a student of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, starting his junior year in the fall of 2017. He is interested in the history of our field to a level that he picked his topic accordingly to compete in the National History Day® (NHD) contests in 2017.

Launched in 1974, National History Day® is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland that promotes students’ research on a historical

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SALIS is Turning 40!
SALIS/AMHL 2018: Berkeley, CA
May 1-4, 2018

In honor of SALIS's 40th birthday, the 2018 SALIS & AMHL Conference is being held in Berkeley, California, home of SALIS Home! This year’s hosts are Julie Murphy of PIRE, Tom Colthurst of the Silver Gate Group, SALIS Executive Director Andrea Mitchell, and Len Levin of the Association of Mental Health Librarians (AMHL).

This is a conference you won't want to miss, packed with informative presentations, educational posters, engaging SIG and committee meetings, and LOTS of celebration!

When: May 1-4, 2018
Where: Berkeley City Club, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.

Book your room by February 1, 2018 to get the conference rate ($150/night). Registration will be opening soon! Get all the updates on our conference website at http://www.salis.org/conference!
theme, “chosen for the broad application to world, national, or state history and its relevance to ancient history or to the more recent past,” according to the NHD web site. Recent themes include Conflict & Compromise, Debate & Diplomacy, Leadership & Legacy, and Turning Points in History. The 2017 theme, Taking a Stand in History, was intended “to provide an opportunity for students to push past the antiquated view of history as mere facts and dates and drill down into historical content to develop perspective and understanding.”

Matthew decided to investigate the federal government’s process of denaturing industrial alcohol during Prohibition in New York City. NHD participants can compile a documentary, write a paper, set up an exhibit, create a web site, or give a performance, presented live. Choosing to perform, Matthew took advantage of researching in the library for resources and ideas to write his script, which he rehearsed and memorized. As required under the contest rules, Matthew prepared an extensive annotated bibliography listing all of his primary and secondary sources that contributed to the development of his project, and also wrote a Process Paper describing how he conducted his research and created his performance, and how his topic relates to the NHD contest theme. Respecting the guidelines of the NHD web site, he developed his narrative in a way that allows the “subject to unfold in a dramatic and visually interesting way.” The title of his presentation (available as a video) was: Cocktails and corpses: The fatal impact of prohibition as proclaimed by Dr. Charles Norris, New York City’s Chief Medical Examiner.

Long story short, Matthew did his homework extremely well, excelled at the regional and then the state level competition, and advanced to compete at the national level competition held at The University of Maryland from June 11-15, 2017, where he placed 8th in the country in his category of Senior Division (grades 9-12) Individual Performance. The video of his individual performance attests to his expertise and passion about his topic. Matthew kindly agreed to answer a few questions and share his experience.

Q: History does not seem to be of too much interest for your peers, let alone topics related to Prohibition. Why did you choose this theme and this era?

A: I was intrigued by the 18th Amendment, which legalized the Prohibition of intoxicating beverages in the U.S., as this was the only amendment to the U.S. Constitution which restricted individual freedoms, and was the only amendment to ever be repealed. Soon after I began my research on Prohibition, I read an article describing how the federal government denatured or poisoned our country’s industrial alcohol supply during Prohibition to make it unfit for human consumption. I was shocked that our government deliberately poisoned the country’s industrial alcohol, often using methyl alcohol as the denaturing agent, and was disturbed to learn that thousands of Americans died from drinking this denatured alcohol! I then narrowed the focus of my research on Prohibition to New York City, where I researched Dr. Charles Norris, who was the first Chief Medical Examiner of New York City from 1918-1935. Dr. Norris was often quoted in the city’s (and national) newspapers speaking out against

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Prohibition and the federal government’s denaturing processes, as he saw first-hand in the Bellevue Hospital Morgue the thousands of deceased people who died from drinking poisonous alcohol.

Q: Can you explain the various components of your performance at the contest to the readers unfamiliar with the process?

A: I performed as Dr. Charles Norris, the first Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, who continuously warned the New York City public about the dangers of government-denatured alcohol under Prohibition. I created my Individual Performance in accordance with the NHD Contest rules, which requires that the performance is presented live in front of the NHD judges, and must be an original production based on the student’s own research.

The NHD contest has categories for Individual and Group Performance, and sub-categories for Junior Division (grades 6–8) and Senior Division (grades 9-12) entries. Each performance may not exceed 10 minutes in length, and can include student created (or selected) props and costumes to create an authentic historical setting for the performance. While dramatic or theatrical appeal is important to the performance, the accuracy of the historical information portrayed and relevance to the NHD Contest Theme is even more important. The Judging Criteria for the Performance category is Historical Quality (60%), Relation to Theme (20%), and Clarity of Presentation (20%).

Q: The impersonation of your chosen persona is amazing, including the appearance and the props. How did you find out about Dr. Norris and what attracted you to his character?

A: I first learned about Dr. Norris by reading an article called The Chemist’s War by Deborah Blum, which described the battle between the Federal Government’s chemists who denatured industrial alcohol during Prohibition to make it poisonous, and the bootleggers’ chemists who tried to renature (remove the poisons) from the alcohol to make it drinkable in order to sell it for a profit to the public.

Dr. Charles Norris was mentioned in this article as an outspoken opponent of Prohibition. When I did some further research on Dr. Norris, I found him to be a larger-than-life figure with a strong personality, who was well-respected in New York City and nationwide as a leader in modern forensic science.

Dr. Norris made his voice heard in New York City by speaking out against Prohibition, and warning the public about the extremely dangerous alcohol supply flowing through the city. Dr. Norris found all of the poison alcohol deaths during Prohibition to be depressing and avoidable, and he believed the Federal Government was morally responsible for the deaths of those people who drank the government-denatured alcohol.

Using his position as Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, Dr. Norris held press conferences and spoke to the city’s newspapers at every opportunity to warn the public about substances and conditions that were dangerous to their health, including poisonous liquor that was cheap and abundant in the city. Dr. Norris took his position as Chief Medical Examiner very seriously, and I was drawn to him for my performance because he made a difference in the lives of people by taking a stand in history, and through his position as Chief Medical Examiner, he did a great service to the people of New York City during his time in office.

Q: As part of your preparations, you have used many electronic and print resources. Which were the most valuable for your project?

A: The ProQuest Historical Newspapers database was very valuable to me in researching my project, as I found an abundant supply of Prohibition-era newspaper articles reporting on Dr. Charles Norris in the New York Times, Washington Post, and other national newspapers. I also found valuable primary source periodicals from the Prohibition-era using ProQuest, UNZ.org, EBSCO Host, and PubMed Central, which had useful articles from the American Journal of Public Health.

For my props, I utilized a famous photograph by Berenice Abbott of a 1930’s New York City Newsstand from the New York City Public Library Digital Collections. Other digital photographs of Dr. Charles Norris that I utilized in my performance (either as props or for inspiration in developing his character) were from the Library of Congress digital collection.

Important print resources that I utilized include an autobiography by Dr. Milton Helpern, who worked as an Assistant Medical Examiner under Dr. Charles Norris and later himself served as the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, as well as a book by Deborah Blum entitled The Poisoner’s Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York, and numerous other contemporary books written on the Prohibition years.

Q: When you contacted the Center of Alcohol Studies, unfortunately, the Alcohol Library had already been shut down, but we were able to use resources creatively. In what ways did you find the Rutgers collection useful or

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A: I had contacted the Rutgers University Center of Alcohol Studies to request information on alcohol denaturing policies under Prohibition, and was put in touch with Dr. Judit Hajnal Ward in the Rutgers Library of Science and Medicine. I requested a reference interview with Dr. Ward, who was gracious enough to meet with me in her office. Her expertise in the history of alcohol studies was apparent to me, and she helped to broaden my view of the alcohol issues that existed in the U.S. long before Prohibition was enacted, as well as the alcohol studies and research progress that has been made in the past 80 years since Prohibition was repealed. She loaned me a 1930’s book from the Rutgers collection called *A New Deal in Liquor: A Plea for Dilution* by Yandell Henderson, which I found very interesting.

I also located other books from the 1930s in the Rutgers collection which were relevant to my project. Before meeting with Dr. Ward, I was not aware of how broad the field of alcohol studies is, and how many resources are available in the Rutgers collection that document research on alcohol studies. Dr. Ward also provided the helpful suggestion for finding additional primary sources for my project by using the Rutgers LibGuides to research my topic, which made me aware of additional American historical newspapers that are available online, including mid-western and small town newspapers.

Q: On a related note, nowadays librarians and information specialists talk a lot about the value of information and how to assess it. What helped you decide about the credibility and authenticity of a source on a historical topic? Have you encountered texts that you found biased or sensational and how did you use them?

A: I tried to analyze and understand both sides of the Prohibition argument that was constantly in the headlines of American newspapers between 1920, when the 18th Amendment was enacted, and 1935, when the 21st Amendment was passed, which repealed Prohibition. I read many newspaper articles describing the battle in this country between the “Wets” who wanted to repeal Prohibition and legalize alcoholic beverages, and the “Drys” who fully supported Prohibition and the 18th Amendment. I made an effort to distinguish between an editorial which provided personal opinion, and a hard news story that strictly reported the facts. If the authenticity of a source was in question, I tried to substantiate the information in question with a second source, and also reached out to interview experts in the field (a University History Professor and the author of an award-winning book on Prohibition) with questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the factual truth.

Matthew is planning to continue to compete in NHD again next year, where the 2018 contest theme is “Conflict and Compromise in History,” and he hopes to advance his newly acquired research skills even further in next year’s competition. He has experienced how engagement with the various aspects of information will enhance his research outcome. His story, a testimonial of a talented young man benefiting tremendously from developing crucial information literacy and research skills via a selected topic, is encouraging and inspirational for all of us on the other side of the actual or virtual reference desk.

On behalf of all librarians, I am officially offering our help, while wishing him all the best for a successful career path, no matter what he chooses to pursue in the future. □

(All photos courtesy of Matthew Rossi)
The Digs Project is delighted to announce that we have received funding from the Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA) to digitize 250 more books! Yes, our proposal was successful, and we are very much looking forward to working with the SSA. In addition, NIAAA has provided more funds, and the crowdfunding campaign is in full swing. We are moving forward!

Meg Brunner led the team on the crowdfunding campaign and has done a super job along with team members, Sheila Lacroix, Barb Weiner, Chad Dubeau and Andrea Mitchell. Through our membership email list, SALIS-L, SALIS members were asked to take part by reaching out to their friends and colleagues, telling them about The SALIS Collection, and making a pitch for them to contribute to the campaign on November 28, Giving Tuesday. Our goal for our first fundraiser was $6,000 and we are going to make it! Giving Tuesday alone brought us up to nearly $5,500, and the campaign will continue through until the end of December. If you haven’t contributed already, please consider a donation! Just $30 covers the costs of adding one book to the Collection—even a small amount can make a difference!

Contribute to the fundraiser here: https://www.razoo.com/story/Saliscollection.

The SALIS Collection now contains 1,530 items with material being added every week, and has nearly 71,000 views. Barb Weiner and Marc Wauters continue to be the stalwarts for uploading. Barb has added the Project Match series from NIAAA, and other NIAAA publications—soon to include their annual reports to Congress. Marc continues to add Belgian, Flemish non-governmental publications: reports, manuals, conference papers, guidelines, prevention tools and educational materials published by Vereniging voor Alcohol en andere Drugproblemen (VAD).

Presentations on the project were given at the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) Meeting in Boston mid-July, and at the International Confederation of ATOD Research Associations (ICARA) meeting in Washington DC in late August by Andrea Mitchell. The latter meeting was hosted by the Pan American Health Organization, with attendees from several South American countries, Slovenia, South Korea, Australia, Nigeria, and Ireland. Christine Goodair is distributing a flyer on the project at the SSA Conference in November, and Julie Murphy is going to give a presentation on the collection at the Prevention Research Center in mid-December.

With the crowdfunding campaign, we are promoting the collection to many more individuals which will undoubtedly see our page views increase. If you haven’t taken the step to get involved with this project, it is not too late. There is much to accomplish; we need and welcome your input!
**Youth Sport Participation and Substance Use: Understanding the Relationship**

This topic summary briefly summarizes the evidence on the relationship between sport participation and youth substance use, and outlines why it is challenging to understand in a Canadian context, the gaps in the research and future research implications. The summary is intended for a broad audience, including health promotion and drug prevention professionals, educators, health professionals, researchers in the field and sport administrators.

**Substance-related Harms at Canadian Music Festivals**

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) and the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) released a bulletin on substance use trends and known harms associated with substance use at music festivals across Canada over several months.

This bulletin is in response to a recommendation from the 2015 report prepared by CCSA and Mass Gathering Medicine that outlined prevention strategies for drug- and alcohol-related harms at music festivals in Canada.

“Substance-related Harms at Canadian Music Festivals from May to July 2017” provides a summary of information collected from a series of interviews with individuals who provided harm reduction or medical services at music festivals in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec between May 1, 2017, and July 31, 2017.

**Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada – Communications Toolkit**

Many Canadians may not be aware that recovery from addiction is possible. But it is and it can last. That’s what CCSA discovered through the Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada survey—the first nationwide survey investigating recovery in Canada. The findings were developed into a report to help Canadians learn about the recovery process in Canada.

In this toolkit, CCSA has brought together a variety of resources to help you and your organization spread the word about recovery in Canada, encourage others to become a part of the recovery movement, and learn about Canada’s national commitment to recovery from addiction.

**European Resources**

Christine Goodair, St. George’s University of London

**Finding Useful Statistics [Global]**

There are a number of places where you can find statistics or information on the prevalence and patterns of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use on the Internet. The following list includes selected statistical resources covering Europe, North America, Australasia and worldwide. It concludes with the findings of a paper commissioned by the journal Addiction on estimating the extent of addictive behaviours globally. Find a comprehensive list from Christine Goodair on the SSA website: [https://www.addiction-ssa.org/commentary/european-and-global-statistics](https://www.addiction-ssa.org/commentary/european-and-global-statistics)

See also: **Finding Useful Statistics [UK] (also by Christine Goodair):** [https://www.addiction-ssa.org/commentary/where-to-find-useful-statistics-and-information](https://www.addiction-ssa.org/commentary/where-to-find-useful-statistics-and-information)

**Qualitative Methods Journal Club**

This new SSA-funded initiative is aimed at increasing knowledge of qualitative research practice. The Journal Club will be hosted by different international academic institutions on a rolling 6 month programme.

The first 6 months of the Qualitative Methods Journal Club will be facilitated by Dr Charlotte Tompkins from the Addictions Department at King’s College London. From June 2017, researchers from within the Department will meet monthly to discuss a good quality qualitative research paper. Following the meeting, a copy of the paper and a summary of the discussion from the journal club will be made available on the SSA website. Over time, this will develop into a library of examples of good practice that those interested in conducting qualitative addictions research can access. [https://www.addiction-ssa.org/knowledge-hub/topic/qualitative-methods-journal-club](https://www.addiction-ssa.org/knowledge-hub/topic/qualitative-methods-journal-club)
New Books
By Andrea L. Mitchell, MLS, Librarian

+government doc
Support SALIS by purchasing via http://bit.ly/amazon_salis


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Research Guides: Predatory Publishing

This LibGuide, developed by SALIS member Judit Ward of Rutgers University, aims to assist with Open Access publishing by helping to identify potential non-scholarly, for-profit-only publishing practices, also known as "predatory publishing."

The guide was created to raise awareness among faculty, postdocs, and graduate students, as well as anyone else who is planning to share research results in a scholarly publication.

Find a variety of evaluation tools to help you determine if a journal or email solicitation is legitimate, as well as databases and lists, information about Open Access publishing, and scholarly articles about predatory publishing.

https://libguides.rutgers.edu/predatory


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