



**IN THIS ISSUE.....**

**2008 Training Opportunities**

**American View on Marijuana**

**Doctor Pleads Guilty to Unlawful Distribution**

**Absinthe is Back**

**Holiday Impaired Driving Crackdown**

**Most Americans Wouldn't Use Legalized Drugs**

**One in Three Drivers 'Under the Limit' Test Positive for Drugs**

**STOPDRUGGED DRIVING .ORG Unveils New Website**

**New Exhibit Debuts at DEA Museum**

**Marijuana Candy Factory Shut Down in California**

# SNARE the Drug Impaired

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**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MINNESOTA DRE  
DECEMBER 2007**

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## **TIME MAGAZINE: 1 JOINT = 5 CIGARETTES**

Time magazine highlights the latest evidence of marijuana's harm as part of their "Year in Medicine" news coverage:



*(Time Magazine "The Year in Medicine From A to Z" December 3rd, 2007)*

Indeed, someone who smokes marijuana regularly may have many of the same respiratory problems that tobacco smokers have. These individuals may have daily cough and phlegm, symptoms of chronic bronchitis, and more frequent chest colds. Continuing to smoke marijuana can lead to abnormal functioning of lung tissue injured or destroyed by marijuana smoke.

Regardless of the THC content, the amount of tar inhaled by marijuana smokers and the level of carbon monoxide absorbed are three to five times greater than among tobacco smokers. This may be due to marijuana users inhaling more deeply and holding the smoke in the lungs.

## **2008 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL:** The MN SFST/DEC Programs are proud to announce an Instructor Trainer School. The course will be held on February 25-29 at the White Bear Lake Public Safety Training facility. The purpose of this 40-hour course is to prepare law enforcement professionals to effectively administer and instruct the SFST and DRE training programs.

**DRUG EVALUATION and CLASSIFICATION/DRE SCHOOL:** The classroom portion of the training is scheduled for March 31-April 04 and April 07-10. The classroom portion will be held at the White Bear Lake Public Safety Training facility. Certification training is scheduled for April 11-12, 16-19, 23-26, and 30-May 03. The location for certification training has yet to be set. More information can be found at [www.mspta.com/dre](http://www.mspta.com/dre)

Questions about these training sessions can be directed to Sergeant Don Marose at [don.marose@state.mn.us](mailto:don.marose@state.mn.us) or 651/297-7132

## **AMERICAN VIEW ON MARIJUANA: BANNED, BUT TOLERATED**

Americans appear to have struck an odd compromise on marijuana, with most believing the drug should remain illegal but wanting prohibitions against its use lightly enforced, the *Denver Post* reported.

Producing and distributing marijuana still carries big penalties, but a number of U.S. communities have limited police authority to prosecute minor marijuana offenses, and even more have legalized medical use of marijuana. "Americans are making a very clear and logical distinction," said Allen St. Pierre, director of the marijuana legalization group NORML. "Possession is OK, but as soon as you introduce the idea of individuals growing [or legal distribution] you lose support in all of our polling." A previous ballot initiative in Denver eliminated local marijuana-possession penalties, but city police are still citing residents for violating the state law against possession.

*Continued on Page 6*

## **DOCTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO UNLAWFULLY DISTRIBUTING A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

A physician operating in Macomb County (MI) pleaded guilty today in federal court in Ann Arbor to charges of distributing pain medications without a legitimate medical purpose and outside the course of professional practice, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Robert Corso of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Dr. Larry White, 65 of Rochester, Michigan pleaded guilty before United States District Judge John Corbett O'Meara. Dr. White admitted to distributing the pain pill Percodan (oxycodone) to a patient, with known drug seeking behavior, without an appropriate inquiry to determine if the patient had a legitimate medical need for the pain medication.

"The illegal prescribing of controlled substances by medical professionals appears to be increasing in the metro Detroit area. The type of criminal violations committed by Dr. White, a licensed doctor, are taken very seriously by my office because they evidence a total abuse of trust by the physician and because they endanger the safety of their patients," said United States Attorney Murphy.

The information presented to the court at the time of the plea showed that between January 2004 and May 2006, Dr. White unlawfully prescribed over 90,000 dosage units including Oxycodone, Vicodin, Xanax and Valium. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Dr. White faces up to 60 months imprisonment and a fine of up to \$1 million and must surrender his DEA license and will not be allowed to write prescriptions for controlled substances.

*Source: DEA News Release*

## **ABSINTHE IS BACK**

Want to party like it's 1899? Well, now you can--sort of. After nearly a century-long ban on absinthe in the U.S., a federal agency has begrudgingly allowed two European distillers to sell the mysterious liquor Stateside. Renowned for its supposedly hallucinogenic effects, the anise-flavored alcohol was rumored to have caused an epidemic of psychosis in France in the late 1800s--most infamously, leading Vincent van Gogh to cut off his ear. But before you kick one back Parisian-style, consider this: absinthe may not be the transcendent experience marketers want you to think it is.

Often referred to as the Green Fairy, absinthe gets its chartreuse hue from wormwood, an herb that contains the chemical thujone, which is reputed to cause hallucinations. But despite years of research discrediting the transcendental effects, new bottles can be sold in the U.S. only if they are classified as thujone free. "When something has been banned for a century, it is natural to think there is something wrong with it," Robert Lehrman, an attorney for the Swiss distiller Kübler & Wyss, says of the antithujone regulation. After much lobbying, his client's brand began selling in New York City and Boston in October. Price per bottle: \$50 to \$60.



But the biggest controversy surrounding the liquor--once dubbed "one of the worst enemies of man"--is about not its resurgence but rather its authenticity. Enthusiasts claim the thujone-free brands, which contain less than 10 parts per million (p.p.m.) of the chemical, are made with the same relatively small amounts of thujone as the old brews. But scientists wrote in the *British Medical Journal* that absinthe bottled before 1900 packed up to 260 p.p.m. of thujone--which may not sound like much, but consider that only 15 parts per billion of lead in drinking water is enough to scare regulators.

*Continued on Page 4*

### **2008 HOLIDAY IMPAIRED DRIVING CRACKDOWN**

NHTSA Deputy Administrator Jim Ports joined leaders from MADD, the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the National District Attorneys Association's National Traffic Law Center (NTLC) at a press event that announced the 2008 Holiday Impaired Driving Crackdown. Due to the greater risk of impaired driving crashes, injuries and fatalities during the holidays, law enforcement officers will be cracking down on impaired drivers all across the country. The Crackdown is being supported by \$7 million worth of paid advertising, using the theme "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest." The press event took place at a booking station and jail cell in the District of Columbia, and emphasized that getting arrested and booked, and having to spend the night in jail is a terrible way to spend the holidays.

### **MOST AMERICANS WOULDN'T USE LEGALIZED DRUGS**

If all currently illicit drugs were legalized only a relative handful of Americans would try drugs like cocaine or heroin, according to a Zogby poll sponsored by a drug-policy reform group. A poll of about 1,000 likely voters ages 18 or older found that only 0.6 percent replied "yes" when asked, "If hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine were legalized, would you be likely to use them?" Ninety-nine percent answered "no," and 0.4 percent said they were not sure. The poll was sponsored by StoptheDrugWar.org, which noted that about 0.3 percent of Americans are current users of heroin and about 2.4 percent are current cocaine users, according to the federal government. The poll did not include questions about the impact of legalizing marijuana.

## ***ONE IN THREE DRIVERS UNDER 'THE LIMIT' FOR ALCOHOL STILL TEST POSITIVE FOR DRUGS***

One in three drivers suspected of driving while 'over the limit,' but subsequently found to be below maximum permissible levels of alcohol, nevertheless tested positive for a range of drugs, reveals research in *Injury Prevention*. The findings prompt the authors to call for routine drugs testing in all drivers who are suspected of being over the limit for alcohol.

The researchers base their findings on 2000 blood and urine specimens taken from drivers who had been stopped by police on suspicion of driving while 'under the influence' over a period of two years in Ireland. Half of the specimens were below the maximum legal alcohol limit of 80 mg/100 ml for blood and 107 mg/100 ml for urine. The other half were all above.

But when analyzed further, one in three samples below the legal limit, tested positive for a range of drugs. These drivers were also more likely to be taking a cocktail of drugs. This rate was almost twice as high as that of drivers over the legal limit, one in seven of whom tested positive for drugs.

The drugs found included amphetamines, methamphetamines, benzodiazepines, cannabis, cocaine, opiates and the heroin substitute methadone. The most commonly found drug was cannabis. Rates of testing positive for drugs were marginally higher among men than they were among women.

Based on the samples in the study, the authors calculate that almost 16% (one in six) of all drivers stopped and tested under suspicion of driving under the influence of an 'intoxicant' would test positive for drugs. As blood alcohol levels rose, the likelihood of testing positive for drugs fell. But more than one in 10 drivers at least 2.5 times over the legal limit for blood alcohol (greater than 200 mg/100ml) also tested positive for drugs.

And among those with minimal blood alcohol levels, over two thirds tested positive for at least one type of drug, the findings showed. Being under the legal limit for alcohol, being stopped in a city, stopped between 6 am and 4 pm or between 4 pm and 9 pm, and being under 35 years were all independently associated with drug taking. Too little attention has been paid to the adverse effects of drugs on driving, but drugged driving can be as dangerous as drunken driving, say the authors.

### ***ABSINTHE IS BACK (continued from Page 3)***

"They are playing pretend," study co-author Wilfred Arnold says of the liquor's new cheerleaders. "It is nothing like the old stuff."

So the question that remains is, How mind-altering were Van Gogh's cocktails? Skeptics pooh-pooh the so-called absinthe effect as hype perpetuated by artists and people trying to sell newspapers. Yet research shows that thujone has a significant effect on the brain, in part by blocking the neurotransmitter that controls nerve impulses. "It makes the brain zap around really fast," says Jad Adams, who wrote in *Hideous Absinthe* about the liquor's renown for causing lucid inebriations. "Like when you have a really strong cup of coffee."

Regardless of exactly how potent absinthe is or isn't, Lehrman says one thing is certain: "If you drink three bottles, you are going to do something stupid." Find this article at: [www.time.com](http://www.time.com)

## ***STOPDRUGGEDDRIVING.ORG WEBSITE LAUNCHES WITH GREAT FANFARE***



In 2006, 10.2 million people reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs.



Washington, DC. In the Rayburn congressional office building, before a gathering of drug policy and traffic safety experts, hill staffers, media representatives and others, the Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc. launched a new website, [StopDruggedDriving.org](http://StopDruggedDriving.org). This new tool will be a great resource in the fight against Drugged Driving. The launch coincided with the official start of National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Month, and the site is now online and available for a wide audience to use and learn from. John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, said, "The thousands of deaths caused each year by impaired drivers are more than a public safety problem, they are a tragedy – because they are preventable. A generation ago, it was considered funny to joke about drunk driving and having 'one more for the road.' That kind of conversation is repugnant now, and once Americans are educated about the dangers of Drugged Driving, they will hopefully feel a sense of constructive outrage."

## ***NEW EXHIBIT TO DEBUT AT DEA MUSEUM***

The newest critical drug threat is not coming from a cartel abroad, but from home medicine cabinets and illegal internet pharmacies. DEA is relentlessly pursuing the criminals who sell diverted prescription drugs, and on November 13<sup>th</sup>, the DEA Museum opened a new, interactive exhibit to wage a war against ignorance about the devastating effects of using good medicines in bad ways. The exhibit, "Good Medicine, Bad Behavior: Drug Diversion in America" explores the history of prescription drug abuse and diversion in the United States and efforts to combat the problem through time. It also includes recreations of period pharmacies, depictions of significant cases, and displays illustrating the impact of these substances on the human body. The rise of rogue internet pharmacies in the past ten years is highlighted as well as the science of how medicine can have therapeutic effects on the body when taken properly, but detrimental affects when misused. There is also a resource area where visitors can read more about issues surrounding prescription drug abuse, interact with key anti-drug abuse websites, and take

## MARIJUANA CANDY FACTORY SHUT DOWN IN CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) -- Federal agents shut down a factory that made marijuana-laced barbecue sauce, chocolate-covered pretzels and other "enhanced" snacks intended for medical users of the drug. The Drug Enforcement Administration said it arrested three people and was looking for a fourth who operated Oakland-based Tainted Inc.

Agents also seized 460 marijuana plants and other laced products including candy bars, cookies, marsh-mallow pies, ice cream, peanut butter, jelly, energy drinks and "Rice Krispy treats."

Tainted Inc. was launched by Michael Martin, 33, of El Sobrante as a small operation that made laced chocolate truffles. When it was raided Wednesday, the company was shipping products to medical marijuana dispensaries throughout California and in Seattle; Vancouver, British Columbia; and Amsterdam. Authorities said the operation also had ties to Los Angeles pot clubs and believe it has ordered four tons of chocolate over the past two years to make marijuana-laced candy.

Those arrested were Jessica Sanders, Michael Anderson and Diallo McLinn. Martin is a fugitive, authorities said. The raids of the factory and four Bay Area houses came after a two-year investigation and growing police concern that the legalization of medicinal marijuana in several states has caused a proliferation of large-scale marijuana-lacing operations.

Laced snacks are often more potent and longer lasting than smoked marijuana. Federal authorities contend that marijuana is an illegal drug, no matter how it used or who uses it, and they don't honor the state laws. "This appears to be represent, once again, the federal government taking umbrage with the fact that California has legalized medical marijuana for medical patients," Sanders' attorney, Randolph Daar, told the San Francisco Chronicle. Lawyers for McLinn and Anderson had no comment.



Several people who ran a marijuana-lacing operation called Beyond Bomb that produced such products as Stoney Rancher, Rasta Reese's and Keef Kat pleaded guilty this year in Oakland federal court to marijuana charges. Beyond Bomb's founder Kenneth Affolter was sentenced to nearly six years in prison.

"These items could have harmful effects on a user, especially the unsuspecting ones," DEA agent Javier Pena said. "We will continue to shut down these production lines, one marijuana-candy factory at a time."

### ***AMERICAN VIEW ON MARIJUANA (continued from Page 2)***

"I think the voters of this country still advocate enforcement of marijuana laws," said Denver police Sgt. Ernie Martinez. In the U.S., 13 states allow medical use of marijuana, and polls show up to 73 percent of Americans support medical marijuana. In 2006, New Mexico voters approved a measure that would see the state distribute the drug to medical-marijuana users. On the other hand, research has shown that just 32 percent of Americans support legalizing marijuana and selling it on par with alcohol and tobacco. That's up from 19 percent in 1973, but NORML's St. Pierre said legalization support "has plateaued." One change in the recent debate is that it has become respectable to argue both sides of the marijuana-legalization issue, with pundits like William F. Buckley Jr. and the Denver Post among those calling for marijuana legalization.