“In the News”

WHO’S GOT THE ACID?
In 1975, the University of Michigan began a research project aimed at tracking illegal drug use of the nation’s high schoolers. “Monitoring the Future”, the survey developed by the Michigan team, is currently the most reliable guide to drug-use trends in the United States. Over the course of the years, this survey has indicated the fluctuations of illicit drug use, but the recent, dramatic drop in LSD use the survey has documented is completely unique. From the survey data in 2000 and 2001, LSD use was reported by 6.6% of high school seniors. The percentage dropped to 3.5% in 2002, and declined again to 1.9% in the most recent 2003 survey.

National arrest data for LSD cases are not recorded, but federal arrests for LSD trafficking and possession, have seen a sharp decline in recent years. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recorded 203 arrests in 2000, 95 in 2001, 41 in 2002 and 19 in 2003. Within the first quarter of 2004, there have been only three people with LSD charges. In San Francisco, at a popular LSD “haven,” the DEA recorded 20 arrests in 2000 for LSD, compared to zero in 2002.

The best explanation for the LSD decline seems to be an enormous drug bust. In November 2000, the DEA cut the LSD supply by 95% with two arrests in rural Kansas. Clyde Apperson and William Leonard Pickard were charged and convicted of possession and conspiracy to distribute LSD. This bust was the largest operable LSD laboratory seized in DEA history. Ninety-one pounds of LSD and precursor compounds for the potential manufacture of nearly 27 more pounds were recorded in the bust. At the common dosage level of 20 micrograms of LSD for a hit, the two men had two billion hits of LSD in their lab. Apperson received 30 years in prison, and Pickard will serve two life sentences. This bust was the third time in four years the DEA arrested Apperson and Pickard on LSD lab charges.

LSD production has historically been dominated by a handful of operators. If Apperson and Pickard were the United States major LSD suppliers, the bust of their lab may have caused the rapid decline of LSD across the country. The operation will not be easily replaced. Manufacturing LSD requires precise chemistry and the chemicals are difficult to obtain. It is not like the much simpler methods involved in synthesizing methamphetamine, PCP, or even ecstasy. But even with the largest drug bust to eliminate LSD, the absence of the drug is not gone forever from society; comebacks are almost inevitable in the drug business.

Funding in part provided by the City of Manhattan
ALCOHOL

UNC STUDY MEASURES ACTUAL DRINKING LEVELS IN DORMS
Research from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill finds that public-education programs addressing misconceptions about college alcohol use can help reduce drinking. Dr. Robert Foss, manager of alcohol studies at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, along with his research team, recruited UNC students in 1997 to anonymously provide breath-alcohol measurements when they returned to their dorms on weekend and weekday evenings. They found that on Mondays through Wednesdays, 85% of students did not drink. On weekends, two of three students had nothing to drink, while most of the rest only had a few drinks. The findings were publicized to college students followed by more breath-analysis surveys in 1999 and 2002. Self-reported drinking, self-reported “heavy” drinking, and measured breath-alcohol concentration decreased from 1997.

ALCOHOL REDUCES BODY’S ABILITY TO TOLERATE IMPACT OF CAR CRASHES
Researchers at the University of Michigan Health System, report alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes result in more severe injuries because alcohol reduces the body’s ability to withstand the impact of a crash. The findings are directly opposite of what most people believe – that being drunk protects a person from serious injury. This reduced tolerance was shown to occur even when blood-alcohol levels are below 0.08, the legal definition of intoxication in most states.

REPORT: FEMALES GET ADDICTED FASTER THAN MALES
Results from a new study seem to indicate that girls and young women become addicted to alcohol and other drugs much faster than boys. Chairman of the National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, Joseph A. Califano Jr., stated “[Girls] get hooked faster, they get hooked using lesser amounts of alcohol and [other] drugs and cocaine and they suffer the consequences faster and more severely.” The nationwide survey of females, aged 8 to 22, was conducted over three years. It found that girls tend to experiment with drugs if they reach puberty early, have eating disorders, want to reduce stress or alleviate depression, or have been physically or sexually abused. These findings suggest that treatments be designed for females to address these specific issues.

ALCOHOL RELATED TRAFFIC DEATHS CONTINUE TO RISE
According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, alcohol-related deaths rose 3%, to 17,970 in 2002. This is the third year in a row that alcohol-related traffic deaths have increased, following a decade of decline. Based on preliminary figures collected by police at accident scenes, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is urging states to pass tougher penalties for repeat offenders and approve primary seatbelt laws.

THE DUAL CHALLENGE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL DISORDERS
Research funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) found early substance abuse is associated with and significantly predictive of later occurrence of psychiatric disorders, including major depressive disorder. The research examined more than 700 individuals from early childhood into their late twenties. The longitudinal study indicated that 6 in 10 people who abuse drugs and alcohol also suffer from mental illnesses. It was also found 25% to 60% of individuals with mental illnesses also have substance abuse disorders. Complex development issues confound current understanding of the comorbidity of substance abuse and mental illness. It is speculated that individual genetic makeup may put some at higher risk for both disorders. Another possible explanation of comorbidity could occur when people attempt to alleviate distressing symptoms of mental illness with drugs and alcohol, causing more risk for addiction. Also, neurobiological changes from substance abuse may increase the vulnerability to and even trigger mental disorders. It is the goal of NIMH and NIDA to support research that will increase knowledge about the comorbidity of mental health and drug abuse, advance efforts to prevent this combination, and treat those already afflicted.
DRUGS

B.C. BUD FINDS POPULAR US MARKET
"B.C. Bud", a high-grade marijuana strain named after its birthplace in British Columbia, has a huge market in the United States, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. The appeal of B.C. Bud lies in its potency; the THC content is nearly 25%, while Mexico’s crop only averages about 6% THC. The demand for B.C. Bud has grown so high that smuggling has taken on new forms across the northern border. While Customs and Border Protection officials have seen a drop in marijuana seizing along the Southern U.S. border in 2002, the rate for marijuana seizures has increased more than 300% along the northern boarder.

COLORADO MAN FACES MURDER CHARGES IN TEEN’S DRUG DEATH
James Steven Keith McDow, a Colorado resident, was charged with first-degree murder for giving a fifteen-year-old boy anti-psychotic pills which led to the boy’s death. McDow gave the boy a lethal amount of Zyprax, a drug used to treat schizophrenia, so he could get high. Adams County prosecutors said McDow was charged with murder because he knew the drugs were dangerous. A month earlier, McDow gave the same drug to the teenager, which put the boy in a coma. The case is believed to be the first in Colorado where a drug supplier or dealer is charged with first-degree murder. If convicted, McDow could face the death penalty.

STUDY FINDS LOWER MATH SCORES AMONG TEEN MARIJUANA SMOKERS
In a study conducted by RAND, a public policy group, high-school students who smoke marijuana were found to have lower math scores than nonsmokers. Analysis of 6000 standardized test scores from students who started using marijuana after the 10th grade compared against their scores two years later, revealed a 15 percent decrease in math scores among marijuana users.

AMPHETAMINE USE ON THE RISE WORLDWIDE
Sandro Calvani, head of the United Nations’ Anti-Drug Office for Asia and the Pacific, reports the steady worldwide increase of amphetamine use. Amphetamines (“upper” type drugs) cause an increase in heart and breathing rates, dangerously high blood pressure, high fever and are highly addictive. Unlike heroin and cocaine, the market for amphetamine-type stimulants has grown by millions of people. This demand for amphetamines may be the result of the lack of social stigma attached to users of amphetamine-like substances. Along with the increased use, many drug barons are switching from production of heroin and cocaine to amphetamines because there is less risk involved and more profits.

STUDY FINDS DRUG MISUSE SURPRISINGLY HIGH AMONG ADULTS
A study out of the University of Michigan finds that more people in their mid-30s misuse alcohol and illegal drugs than previously believed. Of the 7541 participants in their 30s, it was found that 32% of men drank heavily (five or more drinks at one time), and 13% of men and 7% of women used marijuana. Prescription drug misuse was found in 8% of the women participants and 7% of the men participants. Professionals were just as likely to use marijuana as people in other employment classifications. The research also revealed that participants who used illegal drugs or drank heavily in high school were more likely to misuse those same substances later in their thirties.

CHILDREN SUFFER FROM TOXIC METH LABS
Throughout the east coast in the past few years, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has seen an increase in the number of young children suffering from methamphetamine contamination. Authorities say the health risks faced by these children are just as dangerous as those who actually use the drug. Research by the National Jewish Medical and Research Center found the poisonous chemicals released during the methamphetamine-cooking process spread to the entire building where the lab is located. Therefore, children living in these homes show the same side effects as directly taking the drug. In 2002, 3300 children were found in the 8000 illegal methamphetamine laboratories seized nationwide.
TOBACCO

CANCER RISK STAYS HIGH EVEN WHEN CIGARETTE CONSUMPTION CUT
Research from the University of Minnesota shows reduction in cigarette smoking is not enough to avoid exposure to cancer-causing substances. In order to lower the risk of lung cancer, smokers should completely quit smoking. A nicotine metabolite, NNK, which has been linked with lung cancer, was examined in the urine of smokers participating in the study. The study found when consumption of cigarettes was reduced by 90%, smokers only had about a 46% reduction of NNK.

AFRICAN AMERICANS MORE AT RISK FOR SMOKING
Physicians at Temple University Hospital and Temple University School of Medicine found that African American smokers are more susceptible to advanced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) at an earlier age than white smokers. They also discovered that this risk remains for African Americans who start smoking later in life or smoke fewer cigarettes than white smokers.

WOMEN SMOKERS AT HIGHER RISK FOR LUNG CANCER
Findings from a 10-year study using computed tomography (CT) screening indicate women who smoke have twice the risk of developing lung cancer as male smokers. Dr. Frederic W. Grannis believes these results could mean “that there is a potential for a worsening epidemic of lung cancer in women in coming years” because the current rate of young women smokers is high. Reasons were not given for why women are inherently twice as likely as men to develop lung cancer.

SMOKING LINKED TO IMPOTENCE, OTHER PROBLEMS
A report from the British Medical Association finds that smoking cigarettes causes impotence in men and also damages other aspects of sexual, reproductive, and children’s health. The research stated smoking was linked to impotency in 120,000 British men ages 30 to 50. Smoking is also responsible for 5,000 miscarriages a year in the U.K. and reduces the chance of a woman conceiving by 40%. Women who smoke are three times more likely to have a baby with low birth weight, and smoking among pregnant women increases the risk for fetal malformations, such as cleft lip and palate. Also, exposure to smoke in the home creates a risk for children to develop respiratory infections and childhood asthma.

RESOURCES
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Alcoholics Anonymous
Noon Meeting (Mon.-Sat.)
Westview Community Church
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