

WCTU New Zealand

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WHITE RIBBON DIGEST

*"Promoting a Lifestyle Free of Alcohol
and other Drugs"*



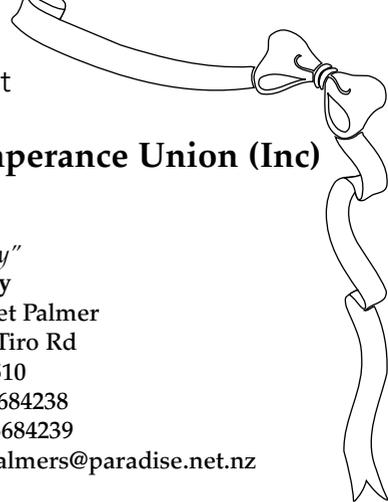
Sir Edmund Hillary 1919-2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Alcohol, Adolescents and Ads
The Invisible Epidemic
Victim Mentality

Plus more

WHITE RIBBON DIGEST

New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union (Inc)
Organised 1885



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"For God Home and Humanity"

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Choice Words

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
The courage to change the things I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

It was lovely to receive Christmas greetings from our sisters in other countries.

As I write to you news has come through that Sir Edmund Hillary of Everest fame has died at the age of 88 years. As tributes flood into talkback radio and TV stations one realises that a national hero has passed on. A humble, caring, risk taking man who used his talents to help raise funds and supply manpower to build hospitals, schools, hostels, bridges and airstrips to raise the living standards of his beloved Sherpas in Nepal as he continued to breakthrough new frontiers of adventure and hardship on the world's mountains and at the South Pole. A role model whose big shoes will be hard to fill and while there is need to inspire and challenge our young people to achieve their dreams while in turn helping others to achieve theirs.



Today many of our sporting and TV stars let their fans down by poor behaviour often as a result of taking alcohol or other drugs.

The road carnage over the holiday break is again on the rise with alcohol, speed and inattention as major contributors. Just a drink or two is sufficient for a driver to think they are better drivers than they are, taking risks they would not normally take, driving longer distances at a time when they are too tired, making our roads a dangerous place to be on.

2008 promises to be an exciting year with the Olympic Games followed by the General Election which will all be well covered by the media.

For those in the Temperance work we are praying that this year will be the year when we will see mandatory health warning labels on all containers of alcohol. We, with our Australian sisters have made written submissions to the Australian and New Zealand Food Standard (FSANZ) in Canberra and hope that common sense will prevail this time.

Molly Aitchison

PUPPETS ON A STRING

Are our Members of Parliament serious about saving young lives?

If they were they would be urgently drafting new laws to raise the legal driving age from 15 years to 18 years.

Tinkering around with lots of other measures, while some are good, but only workable if the legal driving age is raised first and along-side with the legal purchase age of alcohol raised back 20 years and the introduction of a legal drinking age of 20 years as well. Then we would be getting somewhere.

The Adolescent Brain

Many overseas experts have studied these issues for years and have come up with the same conclusions as Dr Simon Rowley, a paediatrician at National Women's Hospital and trustee of Brainwave Trust. He is reported as saying, that an adolescent brain is under construction (underdeveloped, immature) and that adolescents are emotional rather than rational creatures. He went on to say that as they are emotionally driven why put someone like that behind a wheel.

The brain does not fully develop, in the area of rational thinking and decision making until a person is in their early 20s.

Both these functions are the most important components when in control of a motor vehicle. Studies also show that alcohol acting on these immature brain cells is a catalyst for the bizarre driving behaviour we so often witness in the young.

The NZ Women's Christian Temperance Union believes there is overwhelming evidence that the legal driving age should be raised to 18 years, while at the same time the legal purchase age for alcohol along with the introduction of legal drinking age, both to be 20 years of age, otherwise we, along with the majority of the public reach the conclusion that our MPs are not serious about saving young lives.

Private Member's Bill

United Future leader, Peter Dunne is drafting a private member's bill to have the driving age raised from 15 years up to 16 years. This is still far too low, but at least he is thinking of ways to combat the needless deaths and injuries of young people and other road users.

Federated Farmers

Federated Farmers are a very strong vocal lobby group and over 10 years ago helped scuttle National MP Maurice Williamson's drafted member's bill to raise

the driving age. They did the same to Labour MP Paul Swain when he attempted to lower the blood alcohol limit from .08 down to .05. This time they were teamed up with the Hospitality Trade and both were extremely strident in their opposition to raising the drinking age back to 20 years.

Does the Federated Farmers run our country? It certainly looks like it and has a past history to prove it.

The majority of New Zealanders would like to see a tightening of laws that would safe-guard and protect not only young people but the public at large.

NZ WCTU CONVENTION

The NZWCTU Convention will be held at Himatangi, near Palmerston North, Tuesday 11 –Thursday, 13 March, 2008.

Book Review

Allen Carr's Easy Way To Stop Smoking

Here is a self help book for those whose smoking habits are costing them money, friends, relationships, work opportunities and above all health.

The author Allen Carr states, "you don't have to cut down or stop smoking while you are reading this book.

There is no shock treatment. I only have good news for you. The beautiful truth is that once you understand nicotine addiction and the true reasons why you smoke, you will stop doing it, just like that."

It is said that 60% of smokers quit after reading this book. If it is not available at your local booksellers, try your local Public Library.



ALCOHOL, ADOLESCENTS AND ADS

Excerpts taken from an address by keynote speaker John C. Nelson MDMPH, Former President American Medical Association at the World WCTU Convention, Indiana, USA, September 2007 .

Alcohol

Alcohol is a drug. It acts as a central nervous (CNS) depressant. A drug may be defined as "...a substance other than food intended to affect the structure or function of the body... "Also a drug is..." something that causes addiction or habituation..." Addiction may be defined as "...compulsive physiologic need for a habit-forming drug..." Habituation is defined as "... tolerance to the effects of a drug through continued use..." It is "... psychological dependence on a drug after a period of use..." A depressant is "...an agent that reduces a bodily functional activity or an instinctive desire..."

Adolescents

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug by America's youth. More young people drink alcohol than smoke cigarettes or use marijuana. Those who drink tend to drink a lot. Youth report having easy access to alcohol. Adults underestimate the prevalence of underage drinking. They also fail to appreciate the wide range of negative consequences associated with underage drinking. They assume that drinking is something that other kids do, but not theirs.

Underage drinking accounts for 19.7% of all alcoholic drinks consumed. This means that 19.4% of the alcohol industry's revenue comes from underage drinkers. Approximately \$22.5 billion is spent yearly by underage drinkers.

Nearly all young people drink before the age of 21:

- * 91% of all drinks consumed by teens are consumed by those who drink heavily.
- * 48.6% of high school seniors report that they have used alcohol in the past 30 days.
- * 28.5% of youth ages 12 to 20 report having used alcohol "recently".
- * Youth ages 12 to 20 average six days of drinking per month.
- * 4.5 drinks is the average number consumed per day.

(Dr. Nelson goes on with statistics for American college students and access to alcohol by youth. He continues:)

Consequences of Underage Drinking

Brain development in adolescence and into young adulthood can be impaired by heavy alcohol use which will result in lifelong impairments in brain function, particularly in memory, motor skills and co-ordination. (National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Alcohol Alert, April 2006.)

The brain is not fully developed until the age of 21 or older. Brain growth in infants and children is mostly focused on increased volume: increasing the number of brain cells and the connections between them (synapses). The teen years include creating effective neural pathways. The structure of neurons changes and speeds the impulses carried by the brain cells. That is why adults can relay data between brain parts faster than children. The myelination process occurs especially in the prefrontal and frontal lobes of the brain. This part of the brain is important for planning, organising and halting an impulse.

In the adolescent brain synaptic refinement also occurs. Connections between brain cells are pruned and eliminated. Only the most efficient connections are maintained which improves reaction time. Adolescent brain developments occur in areas of the brain critical for considering the consequences of actions, responding to stress, and managing physiological drives.

Alcohol use during adolescence may have deleterious effects on myelination and synaptic refinement. Alcohol may also damage the frontal lobes.

The hippocampus is responsible for learning and remembering. The hippocampus is 10% smaller among teens who abuse alcohol than those teens who do not abuse alcohol.

Alcohol use during adolescence may have these additional **negative effects on brain functioning:**

- *decreased ability in planning
- *decreased ability in executive functioning
- *decreased memory
- *decreased attention span
- *decreased spatial operations
- *decreased academic performance

Another study shows individuals who use alcohol as adolescents exhibit reduced ability to learn – compared with their peers. In a world where intellectual "capital" spells national survival, these studies are indeed significant.

Poor Decision Making

Poor decision making leads to poor academic performance resulting in an

inability to hold a job or maintain healthy relationships. The potential for alcoholism is more likely to occur with an early initiation of drinking.

Poor decision making of teens added to peer pressure and alcohol's influence lead to inappropriate social acts that would not otherwise occur. For example, 11 percent of college students admitted to destroying property while drunk.

Because alcohol impairs the decision making capacity, more individuals are likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour. The consequences appear to be more severe for those who begin to drink at earlier ages. It is especially true for those who begin alcohol use before the age of 15.

A sample of drinkers aged 12 to 16 shows higher levels of diastolic blood pressure than their non-drinking counterparts.

Youth who regularly consume alcohol before the age of 14 are three times more likely to develop a diagnosable alcohol dependency than those who delayed alcohol consumption to age 21 (Jama 2002).

Those who drink before the age of 15 are 41% more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who drink at a later age (10%). The increased risk for lifelong problems include low self esteem, depression, suicide attempts, conduct disorders, antisocial behaviour, and/or dependency on other drugs. Long term consequences include academic performance, increased risk of pancreatitis, hepatitis, liver cirrhosis, hypertension, anaemia and osteoporosis.

Serious accidents and death are consequences of youth drinking:

- * 32% of drivers 16-18 who died in traffic accidents in 2003 had measurable alcohol in their blood
- * 51% of drivers 21 – 34 who died tested positive for alcohol
- * 69% of deaths of youth involved an underage drinking driver
- * 37% of all youth traffic fatalities were alcohol-related.

Youth who were drinking tend not to wear seat belts and their accidents often are more severe leading to more serious injuries and death.

Homicides, Suicides and Injuries

Alcohol is involved in:

- * 36% homicides
- * 12% male suicides
- * 8% female suicides
- * 40% those under 21 who drowned
- * 50% violent crimes

Sexual Activity

Mixing alcohol and sex produces these results:

- * 70,000+ victims of sexual assaults
- * increased sexual activity of all kinds

* more likely to participate in unplanned and unprotected sexual activity

Yet teens acknowledge that alcohol influences their decision about sexual activity.

(Dr Nelson went on to speak about liquor advertising and this was printed in the last WR Digest Summer 2007)

THE INVISIBLE EPIDEMIC

An increasing number of world-wide experts, including medical and mental health authorities are expressing concern on the mounting evidence on regular alcohol consumption is linked with alcohol related brain damage.

For men six standard drinks daily and for women over three standards drinks daily for a period of eight to 10 years and if binge drinking is included during this time it will take less time to show up as irreversible brain damage, which is being coined the 'invisible epidemic'. One in five New Zealanders will be affected and the tragedy is that they won't know that it is happening. Those around them will be noticing the gradual changes in their health and behaviour.

Symptoms

- Degrees of memory loss
- Poor concentration
- Inability to make wise decisions
- Unable to cope with normal stress
- Outbursts of anger and sudden rages
- Progressing to the stage where they are unable to take care of themselves and need full time care.

According to Government statistics 785,000 NZers admit to binge drinking and already many will be suffering from undiagnosed brain damage.

What is a standard drink?

It is the measured amount which decides how much alcohol a person is drinking.

A standard drink of straight spirits	30ml
A standard drink of wine	100ml
A standard RTD (ready-to-drink)	330ml
A standard beer	330ml

Unfortunately our law makers allow liquor licenses to be handed out like lolly-pops. It is logical that if there is no cap on the number of licensed premises in an area, the number of alcohol harm-related health and other problems will correspondingly increase.

CHLAMYDIA RATES INCREASING RAPIDLY IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The Ministry of Health is concerned about the rising number of young people presenting with chlamydia to clinics. Health authorities realise that because this sexually transmitted disease (STD) often does not show symptoms the carrier does not know they have it.

It is the country's most common STD with the number of diagnosed cases increasing by 28 per cent at sexual health clinics and 147 per cent at Family Planning clinics between 2002 and 2006.

There is time for action, and there is a call to have annual testing for sexually active young women who have various partners during the year.

A screening programme as has been suggested may shock even the authorities of the prevalence of this infection and that the 'safe sex' programmes which Family Planning have been running for many years does not work.

It is time to encourage young people to abstain from sex and this would be helped if the drinking age was raised to 20 years. It is so often that these young people engage in sex while under the influence of alcohol and unwise decisions are made.

There is an urgent need to teach young people that it is not cool to drink but it is cool to be in charge of your life.

BOY FRUSTRATES EVOLUTION PROFESSOR

An atheist teacher was trying to destroy the idea of miracles in the Bible. He emphasized that Moses and the Israelites did not cross the Red Sea on dry ground. He said that they waded over in six inches of water.

A boy at the back of the room who was familiar with the Biblical account said, "What a miracle!"

The teacher said, "Why do you say that? That was not a miracle."

The boy replied, "With only six inches of water, it was a miracle that God could drown Pharaoh's army, and on horses too!"

DRUNK GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AT RISK

Police and hospital emergency staff paint a grim and sickening picture of what is happening to our young girls and young women who are binge-drinking in ever increasing numbers. Many hospitals are starting to see more young females than males being admitted for intoxication. This seems to have become more evident since the introduction of party pills. These pills keep the users awake longer allowing them to drink more.

Police report that sex predators lie in wait for these young girls as many do not stick together to help each other get home, but find themselves left to walk on the streets often becoming unconscious and alone. Police find these young females laying in vomit and faeces, pathetic sights in their skimpy clothing more suited to the local street prostitutes. If not found in time they often choke on their vomit, die of alcohol poisoning or become a victim to a sex predator. How can we get that message out to these vulnerable young females that it is not cool to lose control. We need Christian women to join WCTU and make a difference.

We would like to see all the politicians spend some time walking the streets themselves in the early hours, a visit to the hospital emergency room and a few hours in the back of a police car in their area. And then take a vote to introduce a legal drinking age and purchase age of 20 years.

NEWS BRIEFS

CANNABIS AND LUNG CANCER: NZ scientists have found disturbing evidence of increased lung cancer risk linked with smoking cannabis. The lung cancer risk rose by 5.7 times for patients who smoked more than one 'joint' a day for ten years or two 'joints' a day for five years. One 'joint' is equal to 20 cigarettes in terms of lung cancer risk.

ONLINE HEALTH CHECKS: The Youth '07 project a research group at the University of Auckland, to survey adolescent health has hit on a novel way to get response from the 10,000 young people they wish to contact by running an 'online' quiz. It is aimed at secondary students and is believed to be a world first using this method.

GAMBLING EXCESS: Last year 80% of New Zealanders have gambled in some form. Many people have been living beyond their means and try gambling as a way to get quick money back but that does not usually happen.

POOR LITERACY SKILLS: The latest tests on literacy skills show that nearly half of all adults in NZ are below-par. The report states that 380,000 adults would find it difficult to read and understand simple written instructions. This may be the reason why symbols are put on the pokie machine buttons.

LETTERS TO EDITORS

The Press Wednesday, December 5, 2007

TEMPERANCE CONTRIBUTED

Drug laws, including alcohol, are not about science or health, or even ethics. They are about commercial advantage and political convenience.

It is also true that they are adaptations from prohibition and temperance movements.

The temperance movement, the white ribbon women and men, have been scoffed at for decades, but they were the ones who brought in the first rights for children, resulting in the Plunket Society, and as I remember were behind the desire for gambling regulations, the disapproval of smoking and the desire for votes and full rights for women. They were great women who never sat in Parliament but achieved a great deal of good.

Many did not absolutely oppose alcohol - thus the temperance tag - but worked for control of sale of liquor and all products and activities that had the ability to be destructive to individuals and families, especially the less privileged.

Colin Jamieson

Cass Bay

The Nelson Mail, September 4, 2007

DRINKING IN PREGNANCY

September is Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness month. I wish to draw attention to the dangers of alcohol consumption at any time but especially to women who are planning to become mothers.

At the time of conception and throughout pregnancy, alcohol can cause irreparable damage to your baby. The most common effect is permanent brain damage that could lead to learning disabilities, behaviour problems, attention deficits or mental retardation.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is 100 percent preventable. No amount of alcohol is known to be safe during pregnancy. Mothers, be fair to your precious little ones. For further information email christine@ahw.co.nz

Margaret Larsen

Nelson Women's Christian Temperance Union President

Timaru Herald, January 26, 2008

NIGHT COURT

The Timaru Herald front page 21 January 2008 reads "Court delays taking toll" and as a result of long delays of up to two years, many serious offenders have been let off.

With liquor licenses being handed out like lolly-pops and the extended drinking hours, it is logical that there will be a corresponding increase in alcohol-related crimes and naturally following that there will be a backlog in the present system.

In some countries, to ease this problem and to prevent having to build more Court Houses, as has been suggested, that New Zealand introduce night court sittings. It will probably need to have more Justices of the Peace trained up for the preliminary work and until more magistrates are available. Out of working hours there will be more people available to serve on the jury and witnesses not losing time off work.

I would be interested to know if such a scheme would work?

Molly Aitchison

President NZ Women's Christian Temperance Union Timaru

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

White Ribbon Digest Oct-Nov. 1975

"A large portion of the responsibility for the production of New Zealand's drunks must fall on the brewers' shoulders. They are the owners of most taverns and hotels. While they are supplying a 'public need' they must surely realise the damage that drunks from their taverns are creating in society. They have a moral obligation to their community to take greater precautions against the spawning of so many drunks.

"There is an urgent need for tighter controls on the serving of liquor. It is not enough to expect Task Force to clean up by simply arresting drunks, the end-product of the system."

Dr Peter R. Sharples

Executive Officer of the Race Relations Conciliator's Office Auckland.

(N.Z. Listener)

VICTIM MENTALITY

Alcoholics are no longer to blame for what they have become. They have caught a disease, like chicken pox, measles or mumps. The poor fellow was thirsty. He went into a bar one day and they served him a disease-causing drink, which destroyed his brain, wrecked his marriage and brought untold anguish upon his family. But it was all innocently done. No one is responsible for what happened.

We would never allow a company to sell a beverage which causes measles, small pox or polio, but with alcohol it's different. It is different because we really do not believe it contains a disease-causing agent. When it is sold it is merely a beverage to quench one's thirst and to make the heart merry. When the consumer becomes addicted, he has contracted a disease. This schizophrenic reasoning allows the manufacturer to sell their product without responsibility or blame. It allows the user to destroy himself without guilt or shame. They are a 'victim' like someone who has been hit by a tornado an earthquake, or flood. How can he be held responsible for what he has become? By labelling alcoholism as a disease we absolve the alcoholic of all responsibility and guilt. This is essential if we are going to have a 'no fault society'.

When it is brewed the product is 'as pure as a mountain stream'. When the user becomes addicted he is a victim of a terrible disease. Thus, the producer and the consumer are both exonerated from all guilt and responsibility for the suffering they have caused.

Page 42 Wine of the Bible by Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi.

VERY UNDERSTANDING

A patient visited his doctor. After examination the doctor said, "I'm not sure what's wrong with you but it could be because of the drink." To which the patient replied, "I quite understand, doctor, I'll come back when you are sober."



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MISSION STATEMENT

“To reduce health and social problems by promoting a lifestyle free of alcohol and other drugs.”

YOU ARE NEEDED

You can assist the NZWCTU by becoming a member and/or subscriber to the WHITE RIBBON DIGEST.

By signing the following pledge you may become a member of this organisation. “I affirm my life-long pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquor as a beverage, and my willingness to pursue all proper means to discourage and prevent its use in society. I pledge myself to work and pray to this end by endeavouring to promote a personal purity of life, free from the menace of narcotic poisons and drugs, claiming always the promised guidance and help of God.

Signed.

Membership fee \$15 per annum includes WRD	\$
WHITE RIBBON DIGEST fee \$10 per annum	\$.....	
Overseas \$18 per annum (includes postage	\$
Donation	\$.....	

Men are eligible for full membership

For further information contact Mrs Janet Palmer
201 TiroTiro Rd
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