



# MICAP RECAP

Volume 103, Number 5 - October 2008

(A Publication of the Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems)

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Recently, President Emeritus and Board Member Rev. John L. Moore and I spent two days at the Annual Meeting of the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP) in Springfield, Illinois. The theme of the conference was Alcohol – Can We Afford the Cost? Among other things, we learned that the annual total cost of alcohol abuse is still rising (over \$190 Billion/year for the U.S. alone). But there are also many good things happening. Some of these include:

- A. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has even more signatories toward their 2015 goal to remove alcohol advertising from NCAA sporting events.
- B. CSPI has “taken on” several of the national breweries and a couple of them have withdrawn several of their “newer” drinks designed to entice underage drinkers.
- C. We have learned some ways to combat underage drinking in our local communities.

Check the brief article on the back page (follow-up of last month’s White Paper) for details on HB4573. Following the November elections, there will be some losing members of our Michigan legislature who will be asked to vote for this “bad” piece of legislation. It is imperative that we write, phone, e-mail, or speak in person to our Michigan Legislators regarding this “bad” legislation before Election Day.

The Biblical image of yeast comes to mind. Though we (our readership) are a relatively small group of people (almost 2,000), like yeast, we can make a big difference in our state and in our society at large. Thank you for your help. You do, indeed, make a difference!

Sincerely,

Rev. W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, President  
Board of Directors, Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems

## NEWS AFFECTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

### DRINKS SPIKED WITH CAFFEINE AND OTHER PRODUCTS

The following information is presented because of the effect the breweries are having on our young people. We have high-lighted several of these drinks in the past year. The real challenge, however, is to share this with our youth because they are the unsuspecting targets of those high-priced marketing campaigns. The following information comes from the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI).

CSPI ([www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)) has filed a suit against the MillerCoors Brewing Company over its alcoholic energy drink named SPARKS. Sparks contains more alcohol than regular beer and is "enriched" with caffeine from guarana (a high-level berry rich in caffeine). According to a 2006 study, the stimulants in SPARKS do not reduce alcohol's negative effects on motor skills and reaction times but do impair a person's perception of intoxication. As a result, drinkers may engage in risky behavior, such as driving, because they feel less drunk, but in reality are too intoxicated to get behind the wheel or make other rational judgments.

In June, Anheuser-Busch settled with CSPI by agreeing to remove caffeine and other unapproved additives from its two alcoholic energy drinks. In addition, they paid 11 states \$200,000 dollars to reimburse them for the cost of the states' Attorney General's Offices for the investigations. CSPI has also called on other brewers to not market pre-packaged caffeinated alcoholic drinks.

According to CSPI, the MillerCoors juvenile web-site is set to appeal to the "teens and 'tweens." The site offers special recipes for young drinkers which calls for youth to mix SPARKS with beer. Elsewhere in the same web-site visitors are encouraged to drink SPARKS for breakfast alongside an omelet.

Readers! Let's pass this information on to our youth. They are being sought out by our nation's breweries to increase sales of beverage alcohol for the next generation. They can't resist if they don't know about it. Thank You!

### A BAD CALL FROM SOME COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Over 100 college presidents recently signed a statement encouraging our nation to lower the Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) from 21 years to 18 years. Supposedly, this will reduce binge drinking on college campuses around the country and there would be less oversight needed, less cost, less liability, and other factors for colleges to deal with.

But the consequences of such a move are dangerous both for our teenagers and society-at-large. The concluding paragraph of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's position statement: "Opposing the Reduction of the Minimum Legal Drinking Age" is instructive. It is printed below:

"Proposals to decrease the MLDA from 21 are dangerous for teenagers and society. If enacted, such proposals will increase alcohol use and abuse at younger age levels, increase alcohol-related traffic accidents and deaths among teens, enlarge the binge drinking rates among adolescents, and hamper brain and social development among teenagers. Numerous studies support the deterrent effect of the 21 MLDA and its help in reducing traffic accidents and alcohol related-deaths and injuries. Holding the drinking age at 21 is also consistent with American legal regulations on driving and gambling. In addition, reducing the MLDA below 21 would result in a health risk. Finally, if states selectively legislate lower drinking ages, teenagers will be more likely to drive drunk while traveling between states to purchase and consume alcohol. This will also likely hamper the administration of the law. Therefore, the ERLC supports maintaining the 21 MLDA and strongly opposes any efforts to reduce it. While we understand that having an increased legal drinking age is not the only measure necessary to prevent injuries and fatalities related to alcohol use and abuse, the 21 MLDA is an effective measure and it should remain in effect. It is vitally important for families, churches, schools, and communities to warn adolescents of the dangers of alcohol abuse, but the 21 MLDA has proven to be a successful tool in deterring teenage alcohol consumption and in preventing the tragedies caused by teenage alcohol use."

## HOPE:

### MORE THAN I THOUGHT POSSIBLE JUST ELEVEN YEARS AGO!

My brother died in 2007 from cancer partly because he had abused himself of alcohol and tobacco from his youth. At that time, I felt there was nothing I could do to make a difference. It seemed that no one was tackling a societal problem that was simply growing larger and more devastating by the day.

At that time, the last seeming effective change was begun by MICAP in the late 70s (before I came on board). With MICAP's push, the Citizens of Michigan voted to raise the Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) to 21. Several states followed suit. When traffic fatalities decreased as a result of the raise in MLDA, a 1984 Bill created an incentive for other states to increase their MLDAs by connecting legal drinking age to a small percentage of national highway funds. By 1988, all 50 states had raised their MLDAs to 21.

Today, things have changed! A wake-up call has come again and we are not left alone to do the work which needs to be done. The Surgeon General of our nation has not only amassed the information, but issued a "Call to Action" to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. The Surgeon General has provided guides to action for families, educators, and communities. They may be downloaded (in pdf) at [www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking)

The churches are no longer alone in fighting the monied interests that seek to enslave our youth to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The Center for Science in the Public Interest ([www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org)) is taking on Big Alcohol for encouraging underage drinking and providing more lethal substances for our youth to drink. There are others, some of whom include:

- The National Institute of Drug Abuse: [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)
- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)
- The National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information: [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/)
- The Marin Institute of California: [www.marininstitute.org/site/](http://www.marininstitute.org/site/)
- University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics: [www.uihealthcare.com/topics/](http://www.uihealthcare.com/topics/)

and a host of others.

So, what shall we do? The following are only a few out of a myriad of suggestions a small group of you can dream up together. They are intended to be suggestive, but you have to make your own decisions:

- Doing nothing is not an option. We have been called by our Lord to be the yeast that will change society.
- We can write to our Representatives and Senators to let them know our views on temperance and abstinence in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD).
- We can contact our town councils and local police departments to let them know that we don't want them to tolerate underage drinking and we request strong enforcement of alcohol and drug laws in our community.
- We can educate ourselves about the dangers and pitfalls of ATOD and share that information with youth and parents in both our churches and our local communities. This can be shared personally as friend-to-friend, and/or by holding a mini-workshop at your church and inviting members of the city council, police, fire, and rescue squads to attend.

We are living in a new day! Many more people and groups have picked up on the issues raised by ATOD. We are no longer in our little canoe by ourselves. There are others out there who are seeing what the concern is all about. So, let us be the yeast God intended for us to be.

## MICAP FINANCES

**Ours is a ministry to the People and Churches of the State of Michigan. Your support of our work is appreciated and allows us to continue. Thank you for your help by using the envelope enclosed.**

## SMOKING CESSATION+

(CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH)

In serial fashion, we are sharing with our readers the various ways by which persons have been able to quit the tobacco use habit (addiction). This month, we highlight the Nicotine Spray and Nicotine Inhaler.

“**Nicotine Nasal Spray** is a method to help cease smoking which aids in reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms. This allows individuals to gradually reduce their dependence on nicotine. The dose, delivered in one squirt is about the same as many of the low-tar filtered cigarettes. The spray is absorbed through the soft membranes in the nose and acts quickly to stop cravings. Because of the risk of addiction to the spray, it should not be used longer than 3 months.

“**Nicotine Inhaler** provides about one-third the amount of nicotine in a cigarette. This method is about as effective as the nicotine patches. The inhaler, also, should not be used longer than 6 months because of the risk of addiction.

“A smoker’s risk of developing cancer is reduced by quitting smoking. After five years off cigarettes, your risk of developing cancer is greatly decreased. Even in those who have smoked for many years. Life expectancy is increased after quitting smoking. After ten years the ex-smoker has nearly the same risk as a nonsmoker.”

+ <http://www.uihealthcare.com/topics/>

## THE AADIF/MICAP BOARD

### FUTURE MEETING DATES

Quarterly, the third Tuesday, from 12 Noon to 3:00 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church, Lansing, Michigan unless location is announced for elsewhere. Welcome!

November 18, 2008      **(Our Next Meeting)**  
February 17, 2009  
May 19, 2009          **(Our Annual Meeting)**  
August 18, 2009

## LAST CALL FOR HB4573

This “item” is something of a repeat of last month’s article on HB 4573. Because it is crucial, it bears repeating! We are encouraging our readers to write, call, e-mail, or visit their Senators and Representatives so your/our voice is heard loud and clear.

House Bill 4573, which extends the sale of alcoholic beverages to 4:00 a.m. daily and from 7:00 a.m. (instead of Noon) on Sunday will possibly be voted upon after Election Day. Supporters of the Bill are planning to encourage “lame duck” representatives (those who have lost the election) to vote for it since they have nothing to lose.

Well, we (AND THEY) have lots to lose. HB 4573 is BAD social policy. The premise on which it is based is untrue. The playing field in Detroit is NOT UNEVEN as has been indicated by those wanting to change the policy. Windsor and Ontario hours are the same as ours. Adding more “sales hours” in the wee hours of the morning is only asking for more accidents and more costs associated with driving and family abuse. There are, likewise, plenty of places to purchase beverage alcohol on Saturday (if Sunday morning closing is inconvenient).

Please contact your Senators and Representatives at: [www.michgo.com](http://www.michgo.com) and clicking on “Mi Senate” or “Mi Representatives” for their e-mail addresses. Or, Senators may be addressed at: P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, Michigan, 48909-7536. Representatives may be addressed at P. O. Box 30014, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514. Our Governor, Jennifer Granholm, may be reached by going to <<mi.gov/gov>>. Then scroll down to, and click on “share your opinions.” Because of virus concerns, the governor’s office is unable to respond to e-mails. Leave your home address and telephone number in the body of your message to receive a response. Postal mail may be sent to:

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor  
P. O. Box 30013, Lansing, Michigan 48909.

Thank you for this help! May we at least hold the line in “sales hours” in our State of Michigan.