

# BI-POLAR NETWORK & SIGNPOST

Otago mental health support trust

# NEWSLETTER

## OCTOBER NOVEMBER EDITION

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CANNABIS DAMAGES

HEALTH

GREEN PRESCRIPTION

Upcoming Events

Mental Health

Awareness week

**"Think you can't  
change the world?  
Too late, you  
already have. It  
was changed for  
the better the  
minute you were  
born. There are  
more people than  
you can imagine  
who will never be  
the same because  
they came in  
contact with you,  
if only for a  
fleeting moment."**

*Gail Pursell Elliott*

## CANNABIS DAMAGES HEALTH

### Cannabis 'damages mental health'

An expert on the health effects of cannabis says that there is growing evidence that the drug is responsible for mental health problems. Professor John Henry, a consultant in toxicology from St Mary's Hospital in London, told the BBC that studies from Sweden and elsewhere pointed to an increase in schizophrenia among regular cannabis smokers.

The mental health effects of smoking cannabis are a controversial area, with any evidence of harm strongly disputed by some.

**People who want to smoke cannabis ought to be aware that it has equal effects to cigarettes on the body and worse effects on the mind**

**Dr John Henry, St Mary's Hospital**

However, Dr Henry is planning to tell a conference at the Royal Society of Medicine on Monday that it appears likely that some cases of schizophrenia are attributable to the consumption of cannabis, rather than the alternative explanation that patients prone to mental illness are more likely to be drawn to use the drug.

Strong warning Dr Henry says that the strength of cannabis on sale now far outstrips the strength of the drug sold during the "flower power" era of the 1960s and 1970s. He told the BBC: "There's no government health warning against cannabis but there are all kinds of warnings about tobacco. "People who want to smoke cannabis ought to be aware that it has equal effects to cigarettes on the body and worse effects on the mind. "You've got the fact that regular cannabis smokers develop mental illness. "There's a fourfold increase in schizophrenia and a fourfold increase in major depression. That is something very very different from what smoking does to you.

"There's a lot of epidemiological evidence from as far apart as Sweden and New Zealand that cannabis actually causes these problems." Debate continues According to a review carried out by UK drugs information service Drugscope, evidence of long-term mental health effects of cannabis is far from clear-cut. It points to criticism of the Swedish study mentioned by Dr Henry - and says that while cannabis consumption is increasing, the incidence of schizophrenia is not, which would suggest that cannabis may not be to blame. It is possible, says Drugscope, that cannabis precipitates schizophrenia in people who would have developed it anyway. Currently, the number of cannabis users in the UK is estimated at more than three million. The drug is due to be "downgraded" this summer from a Class "B" to a Class "C" drug by the government. This means that while possession of small quantities of cannabis remains illegal, it is not an "arrestable" offence unless there are aggravating factors, such as use of cannabis near children. Lesley King-Lewis, chief executive of charity Action on Addiction, said: "This evidence further demonstrates that cannabis use can be dangerous. "The public should be made more aware of the risks involved with using this illicit drug.

**CONTD OVER PAGE**

# OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER EDITION

## From the editor

Mental Health awareness week runs from the 9<sup>th</sup> of October to the 15<sup>th</sup>, a highlight being the Artcentre ArtyPants show, this year The Trust will present a Julie Christie award.

The awareness this year for Mental Health is Happiness I read a quote the other day which I thought quite appropriate

"Everyone is beautiful when they smile".

Dunedin is bursting with spring, there is lots of good stuff happening in October :

The 2006 Dunedin Fringe Festival presents more than 800 artists in 90 events during its seventeen day season between 22 September and 8 October.

The Festival profiles a diverse range of innovative and experimental performances from local, national and international artists. Audiences will be entertained by the work of experienced artists alongside emerging creative talent.

The Arts Festival is on from the 6-14<sup>th</sup>, check the local papers for more details.

The clocks go back the first weekend of October, so we all have more time to enjoy lighter brighter evening, The gardens will be in full bloom and well worth a visit with the Rhododendron Festival starting and running between 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October as well. On a much sadder note we are sad to announce the sudden death of Myra Corbishley who was a Trustee on the Board during the past three years. She will be missed for her generosity of spirit and contribution to the organisation.

## **STREET APPEAL COLLECTION DAY**

**Will be on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

**If you have an spare hour or two we would appreciate your support .We are not doing a street appeal as such,we have collection points at both Warehouse, Woolworths, and**

**Countdown**

**Phone 477 2598 to express interest**

**"As many as one in 10 cannabis users become addicted. Cannabis use is associated with cancers of the mouth, tongue, throat, oesophagus and lung and reductions in fertility, as well as with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and depression.**

**"Chronic cannabis use clearly involves significant costs to society as well as to the individual user. Many of these problems are shared with alcohol and tobacco.**

**"Therefore more research is needed to provide effective education highlighting the relative dangers of different substances and targeting those most at risk."**

**'Time bomb' Chief Executive of the British Lung Foundation (BLF), Dame Helena Shovelton, chief executive of the British Lung Foundation, described smoking cannabis as a "health time bomb". She said: "Over 3 million regular users in the UK could end up with chronic lung failure. "It is vital that the public know the damage smoking cannabis can cause." Dame Helena said a BLF lung consultant recently gave a lung transplant to a young patient who had only ever smoked cannabis. "Unfortunately, cases like this will become more and more common if public awareness of the dangers is not raised."**

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/2923647.stm>

Published: 2003/04/07 07:20:31 GMT

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**MENTAL Health Awareness Week runs from October 9<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> October**

### **October 9<sup>th</sup> Monday -**

Octagon Mahinder Anaad from Auckland Laughter Club will be in the Octagon at 8.30 to facilitate a morning workout

### **October 10<sup>th</sup> Tuesday –**

**Open Day** at Bi-Polar Network/ Signpost Rooms (115 Lower Stuart Street)  
Shared Lunch – Buffet (finger food) 12 onwards(Let us know if you will be here for lunch)

### **October 11<sup>th</sup> Wednesday –**

Web Page Launch – (nibbles and drinks) 2-4pm

### **October 13<sup>th</sup> Friday -**

## **ARTYPANTS 2006**

The Iron The Stitch and the Wardrobe 7Pm

# Brain Exercise

Work out what the letters mean.

See No 0 as an example.

A chocolate fish for the person who sends in the most correct answers.

- 0 24 H in a D 24 hours in a day
- 1 26 L of the A
- 2 7 D of the W
- 3 7 W of the W
- 4 12 S of the Z
- 5 66 B of the B
- 6 52 C in a P (W J)
- 7 13 S in the U S F
- 8 18 H on a G C
- 9 39 B of the O T
- 10 5 T on a F
- 11 90 D in a R A
- 12 3 B M (S H T R)
- 13 32 is the T in D F at which W F
- 14 15 P in a R T
- 15 3 W on a T
- 16 100 C in a D
- 17 11 P in a F (S) T
- 18 12 M in a Y
- 19 13 is U F S
- 20 8 T on an O
- 21 29 D in F in a L Y
- 22 27 B in the N T
- 23 365 D in a Y
- 24 13 L in a B D
- 25 52 W in a Y
- 25 9 L of a C
- 26 60 M in an H
- 27 23 P of C in the H B
- 28 64 S on a C B
- 29 9 P in S A
- 30 6 B to an O in C
- 31 1000 Y in a M
- 32 15 M on a D M C
- 33 365 D in a C
- 34 14 P in a S

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

9-15 October, 2006

Happiness-Accept-Belong-Connect  
*Ko te whanaungatanga te maioha*

The Otago Mental Health Support Trust is pleased to be able to bring Mohinder Anand & Laughter Yoga to Dunedin as part of Mental Health Awareness Week Celebrations.

Laughter is a universal language.

Laughter Yoga is a physically oriented technique that uses a perfect blend of playful, empowering and "tension-releasing" exercises to promote mental happiness. These exercises last about 20 to 30 minutes, are adapted to suit the needs, abilities and motivation of the group participating, cross all barriers of age, gender and culture and you do not need a sense of humour, to be happy or to have a reason to laugh to participate. Use laughter as a tool, not an emotion.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October**

**Octagon 8.30am**

**Skeggs Gallery, Town Hall 10 -11am**

**Museum Reserve from 12.30pm**

**All welcome, free of charge.**

The magic of laughter works wonders -"lightens" up the serious approaches to life, releases tension, removes stress

## Rates Rebates

**Do you own your own home and are on a low income?**

Then it is most likely that you are eligible for some of your rates to be paid back to you.

The Rates Rebate Scheme has been going since 1973 and was established to help low-income homeowners with the cost of their rates. This year the amounts have been increased substantially so it is definitely worth applying for. You can get up to \$500 depending on how much you earned over the past year and how much your rates bill was. The form is available from the Dunedin City Council or you can get it off the internet at the Department of Internal Affairs website. Just google "rates rebate" or go to [www.dia.govt.nz/ratesrebates](http://www.dia.govt.nz/ratesrebates)

I am sure that any of us would welcome an extra few hundred dollars in our pocket so do it today. If you would like a hand just give us a call and we will be pleased to help.

# EXHIBITION

New works

## Canvas & Clay

Abstract Paintings, hand coiled pots and slab work

by

**Gay Webb**

At the Otago Art Society

11-5pm daily

12<sup>TH</sup> November – 26<sup>TH</sup> November

Entry Free



### **New Foot Care Service**

#### **Basic toenail cutting and foot check**

This service is based at Diabetes Otago Inc., 97 Frederick Street, Dunedin and incorporates the greater Otago region. Two clinics are held per week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The offer is for all people who can't quite get down to cut their own toenails anymore. Feel free to ring Dianne at Diabetes Otago, ph 474 0240. The service is usually \$25 but will be reduced to \$15 if you are referred through Otago Mental Health Support Trust. Get your feet back in top shape for Greg's recreational activities on Thursdays!



### **Disclaimer**

The opinions and research articles expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust or anyone associated with the organization.

## **Sticks and Stones**

The old saying goes "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me". This is the advice we were all given as children to help us stand up to verbal bullying. But is this always good advice? How much can children be hurt by the words they hear?

A recently reported American study questioned 554 18-22 year olds. Of the group 68% were women and 304 had been abused as children. The report in the American Journal of Psychiatry (2006;163:993-1000) says:

"The subjects provided self-reports of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse and exposure to domestic violence (seeing someone else being physically abused). Outcomes...were dissociative experiences; symptoms of anxiety, depression and somatization; and "limbic irritability," a symptom cluster including brief hallucinations, automatisms, and others on a 33-item checklist." The researchers concluded that such symptoms "...are dramatically influenced by abuse history".

Clearly this study had flaws. The subjects were not selected randomly and they self-reported. However, it was strong in that it was a very large study and used consistent methods to rate people's experiences. It was found that the more different kinds of abuse people had been subjected to as children, the more likely they were to have psychiatric symptoms as adults. In particular, kids who had been verbally abused and had also witnessed physical abuse were more likely to become depressed or anxious than those who had "only" been physically or sexually abused. The authors wrote "combined exposure to less blatant forms of abuse may be just as deleterious as the most egregious acts."

So watch your tongue, especially when the little ones are around. Your words may have more power to do harm than you think.

### **Bipolar Network & Signpost**

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Dunedin

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03 477 2598

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## Sticks and Stones

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# NOTICE BOARD

## OFFICE CLOSED:

Staff Planning Day and  
Training

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October  
& Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

### SWIMMING:

If anyone is interested in going swimming together regularly then please leave your name and phone # at the office.

### BEAUTY THERAPY:

Tuesdays & Fridays 11am - 2pm

Very reasonable rates.

Ph Kirsty McDougal at the office.

OFFICE CLOSED

1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER & 2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER

FOR STAFF

TRAINING

## MEDICATION OPEN DISCUSSION.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2006

1.30 pm - 3 pm

Nick Leach from the public hospitals' pharmacy will be at the Bipolar Rooms to answer your questions on medication. Family and friends are also welcome.



## **VOLUNTEERS**

Thanks to you all

# Upcoming Events

## BIPOLAR NETWORK SOCIAL DIARY

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> Oct/1<sup>st</sup> Nov - Women's Group (Evening) 7pm (Please call the office if you are interested)

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Oct./15<sup>th</sup> Nov. - Women's Group (Day time) 1.45pm. Meet at the bipolar rooms.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November - Shared lunch, KFC, \$4, 12 noon.

## MEDICATION OPEN DISCUSSION:

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1.30-3 pm  
Nick Leach from the hospital pharmacy will be at the bipolar rooms to answer your questions on medication.

## THURSDAY RECREATION GROUP 2 – 5 PM

MEET AT BIPOLAR/SIGNPOST ROOMS,  
2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR SECURITY BUILDING  
115 LOWER STUART STREET  
DUNEDIN

OR RING 477-2598 TO PUT YOUR NAME DOWN FOR THE GROUP.

Have you felt an extra spring in your step wanting to get out and experience the season of colour? Well this could be the group you have been waiting for! From beaches to gardens to the bush, nature abounds with life. Feel good, be social and lap up the sunshine. The Thursday afternoon you won't want to miss. Just dial or turn up on the day. The outings are there to enjoy for all.

Greg

## CONGRATULATIONS!



To Greg McLeod and Bridget Doig who will get married on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006. All the best to the happy couple from all the Staff at the bipolar network

Retreat(holiday)2006  
Those interested in forming a group there will be a meeting to discuss options and ideas at 1pm on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October**