

'Genuine dialogue' ambition of national conference on MDMA

"We are hoping for a genuine dialogue and sharing of clinical information, not rhetoric," said a spokesman for the Haight-Ashbury Clinic in San Francisco in announcing a national conference May 17-18 on MDMA, the controversial psychoactive substance.

Continuing medical education credit will be given to physicians and nurses.

Faculty for "MDMA: A Multidisciplinary Conference" includes specialists on both sides of the controversy: Frank Sapienza of the Drug Enforcement Administration in Washington; biochemists Alexander Shulgin and David Nichols; psychiatrists George Greer, Stanislav Grof, Jack Downing, Lester Grinspoon, Rick Ingrasci, Lewis Seiden and Donald Wesson; pharmacologists Ron Siegel and Darryl Inaba.

The DEA proposes placing MDMA in its stringent Schedule I category. Psychiatrists and others have petitioned for its placement in Schedule III, which would allow research on its purported therapeutic benefits.

A ruling is expected soon from the federal administrative law judge now considering the testimony from three hearings and the briefs filed by both sides.

Physician David Smith of the Haight-Ashbury Clinic and Richard Seymour, director of the clinic's training and education projects, recently published articles in two addiction publications distinguishing between designer drugs (synthetic heroin and others) and MDMA.

In the *U.S. Journal* they note that of the 400 to 460 new drug clients seen at the clinic each month, only about one per cent mention any "psychedelic amphetamine," including MDMA, "despite its current notoriety."

Meanwhile, a sweeping "designer drug" bill moving through Congress would outlaw the manufacture of substances resembling any Schedule I drug in structure or effect. A proposed amendment would exempt qualified researchers.

Unconscious. . .

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intention to act arises unconsciously, the mere appearance of an intention could not consciously be prevented, even though action could be blocked. Thus religious or philosophical systems can create insurmountable difficulties if they blame individuals for simply having a mental impulse, even if it is not acted out.

Libet: Physiology Dept., UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco 94143.

Information on the conference: Haight-Ashbury Clinic, (415) 626-6763.

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Drugs, Society and Behavior 86/87 (\$9.90 postpaid from Dushkin Publishing, Sluice Dock, Guilford, Conn. 06437), part of an educational series, is a large-format, illustrated softcover volume derived from many sources: science journals, popular magazines, addiction journals, health publications, even *National Review*, *Rolling Stone*, *Time* and *Brain/Mind Bulletin* (endorphin coverage, special issue on MDMA).

Among the topics: drugs in perspective, drug action on the nervous system, models of dependence, treatment issues, over-the-counter and psychiatric drugs, alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, alternatives to drugs.

The editors urge the volume's readers to think for themselves, asking: "What was the goal of the article? Is the evidence convincing? What tools did the author use for clarity and impact? . . . Use the material to form your own theories." A rating form for articles is included.

Perspectives on terrorism. . .

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- The surveillance necessary to combat terrorism poses its own dangers of abuse.
- Terrorism is sometimes now chosen by rational political actors as an option.
- Crude nuclear devices offer terrorists new possibilities. There is evidence that nuclear blackmail of governments already may have occurred.
- In recent history, fear of all-out war has caused nations to avoid direct confrontation, so suppressed conflict festers and emerges as terrorism.
- Deterrence by counter-terrorism is a retreat from the real ordeal—finding basic causes.
- Groups are seeking autonomy within their own countries. Fifty of 54 wars now being fought are within, not between, nations.
- The terrorists are not the only culprits. With their weapons poised, the superpowers are dignifying a frightening tradition by holding the world hostage.
- Current circumstances are creating a whole culture of psychic refugees. Terrorism may be, in part, a pathological response to a deep homesickness.

Adopting any of the above perspectives as one's point of view, Satin said, is falling into the old trap of politics as a position on a linear spectrum. In reality, the spectrum is circular and complex.

A new kind of war

What is most difficult to comprehend is that terrorism is no longer an aberration but a permanent feature of future warfare.

When firearms first appeared, knights put out the eyes of captured soldiers who had used the new weapons. The knights considered it unfair for commoners with little breeding or skill to annihilate noble fighters who had trained for years and who had traditionally dominated the battlefield.

Terrorism is also a new tactic and arouses repugnant feelings.

The reality is that terrorism has become part of a modern state's arsenal just as much as nuclear armaments; but unlike such weapons, terrorist tactics are within the grasp of the poorest nations.

Since terrorism is only an instrument designed to achieve an end, Mideast terrorism can be controlled only by removing the reasons that groups and states use the weapon in the first place.

—Spencer DiScala, U-Massachusetts, from the *Christian Science Monitor*

A solution for terrorism, he points out, will not come from adopting "correct" political beliefs but from listening to as many perspectives as possible.

"Fifteen years ago, for many of us, the burning question was: How radical are you? Maybe someday soon we'll ask: How much can you synthesize? How much do you dare to take in?"

For a copy of the issue (*New Options*, No. 24) send \$2 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Box 19324, Washington, D.C. 20036.

CLEARINGHOUSE

GRADUATE PROGRAMS: The *Education and Schools* winter newsletter of the Assn. for Transpersonal Psychology lists numerous courses and degrees in transpersonal psychology and related areas. Box 3049, Stanford, Calif. 94305; (415) 327-2066. . . . **Depth Psychology** graduate program, Human Relations Institute, 5200 Hollister Ave., Santa Barbara, Calif. 93111; (805) 967-4557. . . . **U-Southern California Program in Neural, Informational and Behavioral Science** faculty available to speak on brain/mind subjects; (213) 743-5371.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS, PAPERS: **Tenth American Imagery Conference** invites proposals for papers, workshops, symposia, discussions by May 15. International Imagery Assn., Box 1046, Bronx, N.Y. 10471. . . . **Journal of Pastoral Counseling** invites papers on clowns and clowning: mythic, humorous, healing dimensions; 7 Ridge Road, Summit, N.J. 07901. . . . **Journal of Business and Psychology** seeks manuscripts. BPRI, Suite 1812, Rolling Green Curve, Mendota Heights, Minn. 55118.

ORGANIZATIONS: The **Affirmist Society** offers help in starting local roundtables for "bright people starving for a positive voice"; Box 1851, Novato, Calif. 94948.