

the compassionate VOICE



Newsletter of the BCCCS

January/February/March 2013

BC Compassion Club Winter Party 2012

What a way to end 2012! The Winter Party brought together a dozen staff with hundreds of members.

We were honoured with an opening by Cease Wyse. MC Dave introduced performers Rhonda, Shannon, Earle, Bill, Leigh, Nelson and Ray. A special thanks to the Orkestrar Slivovica for the sound that set the theme to the day.

Thanks for the raffle prizes to Audiopile, Essence, Tallgrass, Jean Queen and Abraham's Metaphysical Books. We are especially grateful that around 20 businesses from the Drive donated prizes and give-aways.

The day would not have been complete, or anywhere as delicious, without the food from Uprising, JJ Bean and our caterer Brenda Koch.

Accolades as well to our amazing staff, organized by Laurel, and volunteer members that made the day a success. We could not have done this without them.



World AIDS Day

30 November marked Carnegie Community Centre's Annual World Aid's Day celebration. Beside the great food, the day included the attendance of AIDS Vancouver, WISH Drop-in Centre, and the BCCCS! Our staff presented to community members and service providers about the services available at the club and the benefits of medicinal cannabis use. Thanks to Carnegie for having us attend for the third time, as well as a shout out to staff attendees Isaac, Elsa, and Riel.



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BC Compassion Club

Member News

Cannabis as Stigmatized Medicine

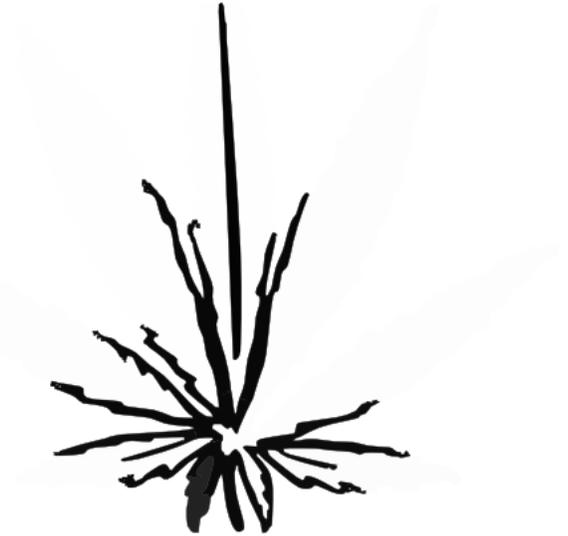
A number of authors from several departments at the University of British Columbia have published a paper called "Perceptions of Cannabis As a Stigmatized Medicine: a Qualitative Descriptive Study."

The study looks at how stigma associated with cannabis use affects individuals who use cannabis for therapeutic purposes (CTP). 23 people who were using CTP were interviewed for the study.

These participants identified stigma to be associated with the perception of cannabis as a recreational drug, current criminal sanctions associated with cannabis use, and using cannabis in the context of illness and disability which are additionally stigmatized.

The paper concludes that, "Understanding how individuals perceive and respond to stigma can inform the development of strategies aimed at reducing stigma associated with the use of CTP and thereby address barriers faced by those using this medicine."

The study is available via the *Harm Reduction Journal*, and is co-authored by a number of allies of the BCCCS, including Lynda Balneaves from the UBC School of Nursing, as well as former BCCCS staff N. Rielle Capler.



Mental Health

The debate about cannabis links to negative mental health has been on-going. Dr. Franjo Grotenhermen, chairperson of the German Association for Cannabis as Medicine (ACM), has written a Frequently Asked Questions segment on the subject for the website *Cannabis-med.org*.

Dr. Grotenhermen defines both psychosis and schizophrenia individually, and notes that "it is difficult to prove that cannabis is indeed a causal factor in the development of schizophrenia."

He also notes the importance of cannabidiol (CBD) in that "a daily dose of 800 mg may be effective as conventional medication in the treatment of schizophrenia. CBD is known to decrease or abolish the psychological effects of THC."

The International

The US government has ruled to continue treating cannabis federally alongside heroin as one of the most dangerous, tightly controlled drugs. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) won the decision in federal appeals court against challengers who were saying that cannabis has effective, accepted and safe medical use.

The decision took place around the same time that a survey study of the European Union (EU) by researchers at Purdue University showed that chances of drug use are lower among young people in countries where there is no restriction on possession of drugs for personal use. The study can be found in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* journal.

The government of Germany coincidentally agreed recently to allow patients to grow cannabis under strict conditions, in a decision handed down by the Supreme Administrative Court.

Health Canada MMAP Changes

In December, Health Canada released a draft of the new medical cannabis access regulations. It proposes to cease: licensing patients to grow, licensing designated growers, and issuing authorizations to possess.

Health Canada will instead authorize Licensed Commercial Producers (LCP) to grow cannabis for patients with a prescription from either a doctor or nurse practitioner. These LCPs will be allowed to grow multiple strains of cannabis, but would not be permitted to supply anything but the dried plant matter.

The draft regulations also propose to allow on-site distribution through pharmacies, hospitals and qualified Healthcare Practitioners' offices, but do not explicitly allow for community-based dispensaries such as the BCCCS.

We are exploring our options under the new regulations.

As always, the BCCCS is committed to ensuring the healthcare services we provide you, including access to whole plant cannabis, non-smokeable options, and the Wellness Centre, are not interrupted.

The BCCCS will take advantage of the comment period to address any concerns regarding these new regulations, as well as any barriers we feel may be preventing us from existing in this new legal landscape. Please stay in touch with us to find out how you can help.

You can read the draft of the regulations at the Canada Gazette online: navigate to the website and navigate to the Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations under the archives for December 12, 2012.

Comments regarding the proposal can be made by fax to this number: 1-613-941-7240 or via email to: consultations-marihuana@hc-sc.gc.ca.

MedCan Dispensary Industry Grows Up

As featured recently in the Metro, the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries [CAMCD] launched their Certification Program late last year. The BCCCS continues its work with this ground-breaking organization, and is pleased to announce that early this year, were accepted as one of the first pilot dispensaries to navigate the program.

The CAMCD Certification Program is a rigorous accreditation process that outlines strict requirements intended to ensure dispensaries implement policies that reflect the values of compassion, harm reduction, empowerment, dignity, affordability, and integrity.

Staff Changes

We would like to welcome our new staff Emma, Rhonda and Donna. We said farewell to Liz, our bright and friendly Front Desk person, and are saying bye to Amber, who is moving to the Island.

The Omicron

The Omicron is an ultra-portable vaporizer designed to work with concentrates.

Rechargeable and smaller than a sharpie, the Omicron is designed to hold up to one gram of concentrate at once! The manufacturer claims that up to 400 metered doses can be obtained from one gram. However, this vaporizer is for use with concentrates only.

Member price: \$140

Waranty: limited lifetime; no warranty on cartridge





BCCCS AGM Sunday, 5 May

All BCCCS members in good standing are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the year of 2013.

This will be held on 5 May 2013: registration will start at 11.30 am, with the meeting from 12 to 2 pm. The AGM will be held at the BCCCS, at 2995 Commercial Drive.

We ask you to join us for updates on the activities of the BCCCS over the past year and the election of the Board of Directors. Biographies of the nominees for the election of the directors positions will be included in the mail-out package and in the members section of the website.

Please contact the front desk if you need proxy forms.

Refreshment will be available. No smoking on the

premises. Arrive early and bring your membership card and identification to speed up registration at the door.

Only BCCCS members will be admitted to the meeting. If, due to physical limitation, you are unable to participate in the meeting without the assistance of a caregiver, they will be admitted into the meeting with you.

The AGM is operated by consensus decision-making. Only members who have been part of the BCCCS for three months or longer and have their membership fees paid and up to date will be able to fully engage in the process.

However, all member are encouraged to ask questions and participate in all of the discussions.

Body Work

We would like to welcome our new massage practitioner Karim.

Karim began at the Wellness Centre in February, and is available on Tuesdays for sessions, as well as every alternating Wednesday.

We would also like to recommend that members try out our new amethyst biomat during their next session.

The biomat is made up of amethyst crystals and can be layed upon. It emits

negative ions and infrared rays that warm the body and allows one to relax.

Amethyst cystals used in this way help increase blood circulation, promote perspiration and eliminate toxins.

Members who have tried the biomat have done so during massage, energy healing and acupuncture sessions. Most have noted how much it helps with relaxing during sessions, and feel warm all over the body (instead of in one localized region).

Grape Seed Extract

Grape seed extract is a concentrated formulation of grape seeds which is high in Vitamin E as well as powerful antioxidants. It also helps reduce allergic response and inflammation. It can prevent capillary fragility, helping to heal varicose veins and hemorrhoids. Do not combine this supplement with blood-thinning medications.



Natural Factors Grape Seed Rich extract is 10% off for March and April.