



MICAP RECAP

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(A Publication of the Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems)

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Recently, The Rev. John Moore and I, from your MICAP Board of Directors, attended the Annual Meeting of the American Council on Alcohol Problems, held at the Southern Baptist Conference Center at Duluth, Georgia. It was a marvelous time renewing acquaintance with many of those who carry on a ministry like MICAP's in other states, (e.g., California, and Illinois, etc.) as well as learning about new directions being taken, new information, and being inspired to "keep on keeping on".

During a presentation by a national speaker, it became clear again that 40% of the American Public does not drink. He held up a pyramid via a power-point presentation which showed the largest percentage of our population forms the base of the pyramid, and they do not imbibe. And the other 60% of the pyramid was divided into the various categories of frequency of drinking, which cause the problems associated with beverage alcohol. And immediately I thought: "When was the last time someone reminded us of that?" On the contrary, in the media (advertising, movies, drama, music, television, books, newspapers, and magazines) the amount of beer, wine, and liquor advertising numbs us. We begin to get the idea that we are the only ones who do not drink. Not so my friends! Over 40% of the population in the United States of America does not drink!

So why are sports so laced with the advertising of beverage alcohol? Why do drinking and sports seem to go hand-in-hand? I believe it happens because the big-budget advertising of big business ALCOHOL keeps it before us so we'll believe they not only may go together, but that they HAVE to go together. We have all seen or heard about tail-gate parties surrounding Alma Mater football games, Sports Bars replete with TV plays and re-plays, and the social expectation that even an at-home party must include alcohol. These are combined with high-budget sexy and macho advertising campaign by the beverage alcohol industry. Suddenly, you and I are convinced that we've just experienced what everyone else in the world has experienced. Not so, because 40% of the population in the United States does not drink.

At a recent meeting, our Board of Directors suggested that the next MICAP-RECAP address the relationship between sports and alcohol. Why? Because the Fall of the year re-awakens that relationship which seems to go hand in hand (sports and drinking). Much of what follows will relate to that theme. Another item which we need to address is a Bill processing right now in our Michigan House of Representatives. We need your support against this Bill, so read the **White Paper** inside.

Thank you for your continued support as we labor together to make our world a better place to work and play. Working through us in our churches, our communities, and our state, God will continue to transform the world into Christ's own Kingdom. Yes! Let's do it!

Sincerely,

W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, Chairperson, MICAP Board of Directors

MICAP's VISION STATEMENT

In obedience to the Commandment of Love, MICAP exists to awaken the Michigan public to the destructive consequences of the use of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco, and gambling.

MICAP's MISSION STATEMENTS (Goals)

The Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems seeks to:

1. Broaden the Awareness of the religious community, public officials and the Michigan Public to the destructive consequences of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco, and gambling and offer positive solutions;
2. Educate the Michigan public for responsible controls in the areas of Alcohol, other drugs, tobacco, and gambling; and,
3. Alert and mobilize supporters to any public policy changes related to MICAP's mission.

THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO REMOVE ALCOHOL ADS FROM SPORTS BROADCASTING IS MAKING PROGRESS

"My husband and I have been looking for a way to try and take a stand on alcohol advertising; we are so glad to find your website. I have two children, ages 9 and 12. I think we as parents should stand together to stop the influential message the alcohol companies are putting across to our children that sports and alcohol go hand in hand. You can't watch any type of sport on TV without seeing some kind of alcohol ad: Basketball, Baseball, NASCAR and most of all football!...I feel we as parents have to do something to help show our children a different path"¹

The above quote comes from the Center for Science in the Public Interest website (www.cspi.net). It gives expression to what many of us feel: that, somehow, sports and beverage alcohol are tied together in a kind of "complex" in the same way that the late President Eisenhower spoke of the "Military/Industrial Complex." Surely, the evidence is in from many places that the Beverage Alcohol Industry (BAI) has bought the sports arenas with high-budget advertising.

Two Illustrations: First, the National Football League (NFL) talks a big game about not tolerating substance abuse among its players. But it simultaneously encourages beverage alcohol abuse among its fans by aggressively advertising beer on TV and in stadiums, where it also sells beverage alcohol. This inconsistency was noted recently by a judge in Ohio during a hearing for the Cincinnati Bengal's linebacker, Odell Thurman. Odell was also suspended for the rest of the season after an arrest for drunken driving and missing a drug test. Said the judge: "The allegations are that you had a legal substance (alcohol) in your body, a substance that they advertise and get money from, millions of dollars a year(.)" While not exonerating Thurman, the judge further indicated that if the NFL was serious about alcohol abuse prevention, it would stop alcohol sponsorship of games as well as selling alcohol within the sports arenas over which it has jurisdiction.²

Second, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) recently tapped race-car driver Jimmy Spencer to carry its anti-drug message to America's Youth. A wonderful idea! Except, both Spencer and NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) have lucrative deals pushing beverage alcohol.

A recent ONDCP brochure touting the office's outreach to the racing world pictured Spencer's car painted with the "BUD" logo. Spencer's web-site had pictures of him with official NASCAR insignia, clothing, etc., adorned with Busch beer cases. The site is now closed down. But there is no indication that the deal has been terminated. ONDCP's anti-drug message is compromised by NASCAR's beer deals, which include "omnipresent beer logos even on kid-friendly items like caps and toy cars."³

Part of the MIX-UP is that the Government Office doesn't consider beverage alcohol a drug because it has been legalized. MICAP (and CSPI) call it **a legal drug which may be abused**. Because of \$Billions of costs annually (\$184.6 Billion in 2004),⁴ we believe our definition is more helpful to society. 70% of those costs can be attributed to lost productivity in the work place. But \$55.4 Billion can be attributed to

beverage alcohol caused medical conditions, motor vehicle crashes, homicide, suicide, fall injuries, poisoning (non-alcohol), fire injuries, drowning, alcohol poisoning, and other.⁴

Is there any hope that it will get better rather than worse? I believe so. In 2002, CSPI launched what they call a "Campaign for Alcohol-Free Sports TV (CAMPAIGN)." The goal is to have a completely alcohol-free sports-broadcasting by 2015. In 2003, Karen Holbrook, then President of Ohio State University led OSU to sign on and take no new advertising contracts involving beverage alcohol when these contracts expire. Many other smaller schools have also signed onto the CAMPAIGN as well.

That effort has taken a big leap forward this year by the creation of the Big Ten Conference and FOX Cable Network joint venture in what is known as the Big Ten Sports Channel. While MSU has not signed on to the campaign, its President, Lou Anna Simon is to be commended for her comments (with Mary Sue Coleman, Pres., U. of M.) about the new sports channel: "This is an opportunity to have more of a voice in how university and athletic content is presented. We did not want to see alcohol (...) advertising embedded in our televised athletic events."⁵ As of this writing a number of well-known college coaches have also joined the "CAMPAIGN" to end alcohol ads on college sports broadcasts. Some of them include: John Wooden, Dean Smith, Joe Paterno, Jim Calhoun, Rene Portland, Grant Teaf, and Andy Geiger.⁶ As of September 18, 2007, 190 different organizations endorse the "Campaign" including MiCAP. In addition, 248 colleges and 2 Athletic Conferences have signed onto the College Commitment part of the "Campaign."

What can we do here in Michigan? I urge you to write letters to Lou Anna Simon, President of MSU, thanking her for her courageous stand on the Alcohol-Free Sports Network at:

President Lou Anna Simons,
Office of the President,
Michigan State University,
East Lansing, Michigan 48823.

Besides your words of appreciation, encourage her to urge the Board of Trustees and the Athletic Department to sign onto the "CAMPAIGN". We do not believe that MSU will lose revenue. There are many other sponsors who will gladly step up to the plate to support MSU athletics. And, a national pole conducted by CSPI indicates that 71% of the American Public want colleges and universities to dump beer ads.⁶

Besides that, your letters to your own Alma Mater urging it and its Athletic Department to sign on to the CAMPAIGN will be helpful. You already have those addresses. Together, we can make an impact on the Goliath Alcohol Industry and lessen the impact it makes on our college students, fans, and especially on under-age drinkers.

Notes:

1. Campaign for Alcohol Free Sports TV, Campaign Information, Statement of Support, cspinet.org/booze/CAFST/support.htm

2. NFL Linebacker Case Highlights League's Ties to Alcohol Money, Says CSPI, <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200709042>
3. Drug Czar Taps Beer-Soaked NASCAR, <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200208051.html>.
4. Hammond, Robert, Almost All You Ever Wanted to Know about Alcoholism, copyright, ARIS, Lansing, Mi. 48912, p. 9.
5. Hacker, George, Power-Point Presentation, Washington Update, Am. Council on Alcohol Problems, September 18, 2007.
6. College Greats Join Call for End to Alcohol Ads on College Sports Broadcasts, <http://www.cspinet.org/new/20040514>
7. Ibid, Hacker, George (above)
7. Hard questions do not mean that the legislator is against you. Use all questions as an opportunity to let him or her hear more about your issue.
8. If the legislator is on your side, make him or her feel good about it.
9. Press for a commitment (unless the legislator is clearly opposed).
10. If your legislators are not available, visit their offices anyway and nurture relationships with staff while you're there.

^a Taken from The Marin Institute, California, http://www.marininstitute.org/print/take_action/10ways.htm

BOARD MEETINGS: FUTURE DATES:

- 4th Quarter Mtg., November 20, 2007
- 1st Quarter Mtg., February, 19, 2008
- 2nd Quarter Mtg., May 20, 2008 (Ann. Mtg.)
- 3rd Quarter Meeting, August 19, 2008
- 4th Quarter Meeting, November 18, 2008

Unless otherwise announced, meetings are held at Central United Methodist Church, 215 North Capitol Avenue, Lansing, Michigan 48933. The meetings run from 12:00 Noon to about 3:00 p.m. Our meetings are "open" and anyone receiving the MICAP-RECAP is welcome to attend any meeting.

At our next meeting, on **November 20th, 2007**, Dr. Jerome Gallagher, PhD, a psychologist in practice in Okemos, will be present to tell us of the treatment model which he uses with persons referred to him by the courts in the Tri-County area. You won't want to miss this.

MICAP SUPPORT:

This is the season of the Fall Fundraisers for PBS and other like organizations. And, yes, it's Fall, October, but it's always Fall for MICAP. And while expenses have been trimmed, there are some on-going expenses just to be in ministry. Your support, by using the enclosed envelope, will be much appreciated. Thank you for your own personal support, and thanks to the many churches for their collective support.

TEN WAYS TO TALK TO A LEGISLATOR ^a

1. Get an appointment. Call your legislators' nearest district office and ask to see him or her on their next trip home (usually a Friday during the legislative session).
2. If you are in...(Lansing) for business or pleasure or live there, go and see him/her there.
3. Don't be awed by your legislators. You probably know more about your issue than they do. So act confident, even if you don't feel it.
4. Know your facts and keep your points concise. Make your pitch early on, and limit the entire meeting to ten (yes, 10) minutes.
5. Be a good listener.
6. Don't let him or her evade the issue.

YOUTHS AGAINST ALCOHOL

The Independent Committee On Alcohol And Drugs For United Methodists, from Richardson, Texas, sponsors an essay contest each year for youth throughout the whole United States. This year, 2007, three youth were: (1) winner, and (2) honorable mention from Michigan. They are:

Winner Bracket: Rebecca L. Farnum, from Mount Pleasant, Michigan. She attends the Mount Pleasant First Un. Meth. Church

Hon. Mention Bracket: Julia Humenik, from Charlotte, Michigan. She attends the Lawrence Ave. Un. Meth. Ch. In Charlotte, Mi.

Hon. Mention Bracket Samantha Weaver, from Lake Orion. She attends the United Methodist Church in Lake Orion, Mi.

Congratulations to these young persons who are beginning early in their careers to make a difference in the Church and Community and State where they live.

THE STOP ACT

The "Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking" Act became law on December 7, 2006. This act can be a primary aid in the fight across our nation to prevent underage drinking. Some of its major provisions include:

- Coordinated leadership role for the federal government to combat underage drinking via a Secretary-level Interagency Coordinating Committee;
- Annual report to better monitor progress on key underage drinking indicators, and survey state underage drinking prevention policies and programs;
- National adult-oriented media campaign to prevent underage drinking;
- Funding to communities and colleges to combat youth alcohol use;
- Funding for additional research on underage drinking; and
- Authorization of \$18 Million.

MICAP welcomes this move by our federal Congress and hopes that the Congress and Administration will work to bring the provisions of this legislation to fruit in the states and cities and villages of our country.

**LANSING LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY
HOUSE BILL 4573
Research and Reason: A White Paper**

By Rev. W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, Retired
West Michigan Conference/United Methodist Church
President, Board of Directors, AADIF (d/b/a MICAP)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Following Prohibition, which was repealed in 1933, provisions were made in Michigan for the distribution of beverage alcohol. Those provisions gave the Michigan Public access to beverage alcohol, but also limited unbridled access in several ways: 1) limiting the number of hours during which beverage alcohol could be bought or served, 2) limiting the access points (only a certain number based on the population of the village, township, city, etc), 3) taxation [generally, the higher the cost, the less beverage alcohol is consumed], and 4) limiting the age at which beverage alcohol may be purchased/consumed.

Through the years, the pressure has been brought to bear on the State Legislature and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) to ease these restrictions. This pressure has been brought primarily by the Liquor, Hospitality, and Tourism industries and councils in Michigan. And, the rationale has been the appeal toward leveling the playing field (someone else has an advantage which we don't have) in relation to neighboring governmental units be they townships, cities, counties, states, or countries (in the case of Canada and Mexico).

HOUSE BILL 4573

The occasion of this paper is that House Bill 4573 is in a FAST-TRACK stage in its journey toward becoming law. If passed, HB 4573 would provide that Licensees selling beverage alcohol in Michigan could purchase a permit for \$2,500.00 to remain open longer in the wee hours of the morning. Licensed sellers of beverage alcohol could then remain open past the 2:00 a.m. closing time to 4:00 a.m. Another Bill has suddenly been subsumed under HB4573 which would provide for sales of Alcoholic Beverages between 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 Noon on Sundays. Current rules provide for purchase of alcohol from Noon on Sundays.

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

The argument, as I hear it from one of our representatives is unfair competition by Windsor Casinos (across from Detroit). The implication (unsaid) is that Windsor Casinos sell beverage alcohol until 4:00 a.m. and by adding an extra two (2) hours for Michigan servers and retailers to sell beverage alcohol, the playing field will be leveled.

BUT THE PLAYING FIELD IS ALREADY LEVEL

Yes, the playing field is already level! I, personally, called Harrah's Windsor Casino. Their telephone answering machines confirmed that their bar hours are still listed with a 2:00 a.m. closing time. The Province of Ontario, Canada (in which Windsor is situated) moved from a 1:00 a.m. closing time to a 2:00 a.m. closing time in 1996 because Michigan regulations allowed beverage alcohol sales until 2:00 a.m. in Michigan. When that happened, Windsor experienced a sudden rise in alcohol-related motor vehicle casualties in the Windsor area. This was contrasted by a significant decrease in motor vehicle casualties in the Detroit area

in the same time frame (Vingilis, 2006).¹ Experts believe the reason is that "repatriated" Windsor drivers are now driving in Windsor after the extended opening hours.

MORE TO THE POINT!

More to the point are the checks to access built into the historical Michigan system when Prohibition was reversed in 1933. Our forefathers knew that there are some persons who are unable or unwilling to police themselves with regard to beverage alcohol. In controlling access to beverage alcohol, [by way of 1) serving hours, including retaining a 2:00 a.m. limit and including no Sunday sales before noon; 2) curtailing the number(s) of outlets based on population; 3) recent stricter enforcement of drinking and driving laws; as well as 4) taxation which raises the price and makes it less accessible], those who have created our statues in Michigan have helped remove some of the harm done by those unable or unwilling to be responsible.

BUT MY, THOSE DOLLARS MAY LOOK GOOD

No one has said anything about the financial difficulty the State of Michigan is in at the present and what effect that might have on votes to adopt HB 4573. But when I look at the fees suggested in the House Bill (\$2,500.00 for the late morning hours and \$1,500.00 for the Sunday opening) 365 days a year, it isn't much. While we don't know how many establishments are interested in those permits, I was told it wasn't very many. Mostly, those Detroit casinos competing with casinos in Windsor. What I suspect is that if one casino has one, all casinos will want one and they are proliferating annually in Michigan at the present time.

Dollars aren't all bad, however. And since one of the most cost-effective ways of controlling access to beverage alcohol, especially for the under-aged drinker, is taxation, many experts in the area of controlling beverage alcohol sales advocate raising both federal and state taxes. Against that, the Liquor Industry has lobbied long and hard for many years to keep taxes on all beverage alcohol products from rising. As I explore this and find out more, I will pass it along to our readers in one of the future MICAP-RECAPs.

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW

I urge you to contact your Representative in the Michigan Legislature now. Use some of the talking points previously indicated. But above all, be sure to get your point across. Michigan does not need longer "open hours" for bars, hotels, grocery stores, casinos, or other retail establishments. And, any lengthening of those hours will add injury to the already stressed "social fabric" of our state in many ways, including: business failures, motor vehicle accidents, poor job performance, injuries, assaults, disease, and a host of other incidents. Ask your legislator to say "NO" to HB 4573 and/or any other Bill which replaces it but deals with the same issue. HB4573 is deplorable social policy. It puts the interests of the Liquor, Casino, and Tourism industries ahead of the interests of the common citizens in Michigan. The costs incurred by the state will never be covered by the paltry fees established within the Bill.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your support and commitment. Your support, commitment, and action will make Michigan a better place in which to live. It will also grow God's Kingdom for the better.