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## EAGLE FEATHER RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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Welcome, Willkommen, Bienvenue, Bienvenidos, Benvenuto. We begin with the current and widespread problem of addiction and we are not referring to illegal drugs.

### **ADDICTIONS AND YOUR BRAIN**

When we hear of addictions, we often think of alcohol, tobacco or drugs like cocaine and heroin. As companies compete for your dollar, there is a conscious effort to provide a product that will have you coming back for more. This is where addiction takes root. There are biological reasons for cravings. There are areas in the brain that when stimulated often release chemicals like dopamine, releasing opiates in the brain. A common addiction that is widespread in the U.S. are certain processed foods—chocolates, cheeses, sugars, starches and meats—that are capable of stimulating the same part of the brain that responds to alcohol, tobacco and even heroin. The new evidence was presented at the annual meeting by the *Society for Neuroscience* in October. According to coauthor Paul Johnson of the *Scripps Research Institute* in his findings to *Science News*, “this is the most complete evidence to date that suggests obesity and drug addiction have common neurobiological underpinnings.” Dr. Neal Barnard, president and founder of the *Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine* and an adjunct professor at the *George Washington University School of Medicine* states there are reasons for those cravings and people who think they are too weak-willed to stop eating their favorite foods may simply be addicted to them. Foods that produce craving, and sabotage healthy diets, include processed sugary and starchy foods that include cookies, cakes and white bread, as well as chocolate, cheese and meat. As with drugs, coffee or alcohol, people go into withdrawal when they do not have these foods. Some foods not only lift your mood but are appetite stimulants as well. According to Dr. Barnard, they play havoc with your blood sugar which brings on cravings. There are some starches like pasta that will not spike your blood sugar level. Should you cut them altogether? Should you diet? The problem is that smaller portions of what you should not be eating, merely has you coming back for more. This is because this type of food is fattening, causing you to crave more, and is nutrient poor. Junk food has elicited addictive behavior in rats similar to the behaviors of rats addicted to heroin. In a study one group of rats was given a broad range of processed foods, from bacon to cheesecake while another group received a high-nutrient, low calorie food. Rats that ate junk food soon developed compulsive eating habits and

became obese. Researchers also tested the responsiveness of the brain's pleasure centers. After only five days on the junk food diet, rats showed "profound reductions" in the sensitivity of their brain's pleasure centers, suggesting that they became habituated to the food. Even when foot shock was applied to stop eating, they continued to eat, even though they knew the shock was coming. As a result they ate more to get the same amount of pleasure. They lose control. This is the hallmark of addiction. What are the health implications in relation to the food industry? It is becoming very clear that the food industry knows what it takes to get you addicted to their product that ultimately brings in a continuous flow of profit. There are ethical and moral questions that need to be brought to the attention of your governmental representatives. The brain and its altered patterns can be a clue to other health issues such as PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder that is common to returning soldiers as well as concussions that occur in football from the pee-wee league to the professional ranks. The latter has now been linked with memory loss and Alzheimer's disease. Yet to be studied is the new addiction among children and video games and the link to altered behavior. Some preliminary studies indicate that negative game avatars wearing black cloaks or roles as Ku Klux Klan in children's video games brought about negative, aggressive and antisocial behaviors. Moreover, there was a tendency to be more ego-centered as opposed to a favoring of group cohesion.

#### **PROFIT, POLITICIANS AND CHRISTIANITY**

More and more Americans are becoming aware of the corruption within corporate America. The quick-buck strategies have led to \$7 billion ponzi schemes, bank surcharges and fraud. Case in point is Allan Stanford and his finance chief James M. Davis who were roommates and good Baptists at Baylor University. They began their meetings with prayer, bowed to clients and in their godly board chambers but they looked for a way to avoid rendering unto Caesar what is Caesars'. Too often we hear about the money rich and powerful types claiming their Christian faith drives their every movement and fills every moment. One reporter asked, "What version of the Bible is up on that corporate shelf?" We are amidst a serious gap and inequities between social classes—40 million people without health insurance while we allow the health insurance companies to make obscene profits at the expense of the middle class and the poor. Profits in the U.S. have become the imperative, the only truly American virtue that dominates. Politicians insist this is a "Christian nation" whose policies reflect as much. What happened to "Sell your possessions and give to the poor" or "You cannot serve God and wealth"? Politicians will say anything to get votes and amass power. Some critics have suggested an overhaul of the congressional legal corruption that begins with accepting millions from lobbyists and special interest groups. Congress is the only one that can bring about serious reform but that is where the problem is centered. Money is at the root of legal corruption. The system of lobbying and the billions that go into the pockets of congressmen for their campaigns needs to be eradicated. This should be done by small donations by individual voters at tax time with limitations regarding the amount donated. According to Harvard theologian Harvey Cox, the nation-state system, a scientifically grounded technology, a bureaucratic rationalism, an incessant drive for economic growth and the secularization of religion characterize the contemporary modern society. We live in an era of posts: post-cold war, post-modern, post-industrial, post-Christian, post-ideological, post-materialist and post-Eurocentric. The denizens of the post-era, according to David R. Gress, can only look forward to endless rounds of the analyzing the rationalist, romantic,

revolutionary, reactionary, multiculturalists, American, pagan, Christian, liberal and conservative. There are those who see material progress as a measure of success in culture and society, who see capitalism, science and liberal democracy on the verge of embracing the vast majority of the world's people. This globalization originates in a society that is fragmented at its social and cultural core, notwithstanding a provider of economic inequities into halves and have-nots, is perhaps the essence of the conflict. Today, the U. S. model is riddled with conflict: racism, fights over abortion, prayer in schools, educational collapse in the public schools, role of government in protecting the welfare of families, corruption throughout many of our institutions (politicians, clergy, lawyers, doctors, hospitals, business both large and small), Americans have come to realize that the politician and the system is not to be trusted. There is a struggle between the Religious Right fundamentalists (U.S. and Islamic) and the secular liberals, Protestants, Jews and Catholics (from Secular Humanists to New Age religions). The struggle is about what the U.S. society and by extension, modern society, and the contemporary and future West should be and not what it is. (See "Rediscovering the Sacred: From the Secular to a Post-modern Sense of the Sacred." in our Website).

#### **WARS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Recently we were informed of the total cost for stationing one U.S. soldier in Afghanistan for one year is \$1 million. Antonio Waldez Goes da Silva, governor of the Amazonian state of Amapa that has the biggest national park in the world was asked if we kept just one soldier back, what would that buy you? He replied: "If you keep three soldiers back from Afghanistan, that would be enough for me to keep the State University running for a year, so 1,400 students could take different courses on sustainable development for the Amazon." An intergovernmental working group for saving the rain forests estimates that for about \$30 billion, we could reduce deforestation in places like Brazil, Indonesia and the Congo by 25 percent by 2015. The largest polluters are the U.S. and China. They need to set the example by making serious commitments for reducing carbon emissions. Forest rich countries like Brazil depend on the water the rain forests provide for energy and agriculture and they now see a new economic model for "natural capitalism." What Brazil, Indonesia and the Congo lack are the funds to take this new economic model to scale. Tropical forests represent about 5% of the Earth's surface but harbor 50 % of living species. What is lost there is felt everywhere. If we lose what is left of the Amazon, we all will feel drastic climactic effects, the changing rainfall and the loss of biodiversity that enriches and sustains this world.

#### **DID YOU KNOW....?**

- Lincoln is generally seen above reproach, honest, humble, un-ambitious and one born in a log cabin. As a boy he did live in a cabin with a dirt floor but according to historian Prof. Shenkman, he lived much better than his neighbors. His family past was a source of shame to him. His mother was illiterate. His mother's sister had an illegitimate child and his own mother, Nancy Hanks had an illegitimate child. Although good at it, Lincoln hated farm work. Although he had little as a young man, he was very ambitious. At age 23, he ran for the State legislature and lost. He gains exposure and contacts as a Postmaster where he illegally used the frank to cancel postage fees for his future constituents. While there was a \$10.00 fine for each infraction, he was never caught. As a legislator he became an

influential speaker and became what we would call today “a politician’s politician”. He knew when to keep quiet on controversial issues. He once held along with many white Americans the hope that freed slaves could be shipped back to Africa. While opposed to slavery later, there was some political posturing on the issue. On occasion he was to have been for slavery in one part of the state of Illinois and against it in another. He defended the railroads in what could be labeled as a corporate lawyer today. Although superstitious, he had a brilliant mind, an excellent sense of humor and had the innate talent for public speaking.

- The Boston Tea Party incident has been taught since grade school, one which Americans were forced a tax on tea and thus they rebelled by dumping British Tea overboard. Their freedoms, it is said, were being infringed upon. The story is filled with stirring details; colonist dressed as Indians calling themselves Mohawks with a mysterious code of silence by its participants. It is very misleading. What is generally held is that colonists feared the effect of British taxes but in reality the Tea Act reduced the duty of British tea imported to America. What is not brought up is that other teas were being smuggled in from Holland by American merchants like John Hancock. Three fourths of the tea sold in Colonial America was being smuggled. The Boston Tea Party was organized to save America’s smugglers from economic competition. It was the rich that opposed Parliament; the small tax increases had little impact on the average American.
- Most of the lore of Western towns, shootings at high noon and notorious killers are the fabrication of Hollywood screenplay writers, who in turn were influenced by the outrageous fiction of the nineteenth century dime novels. There is no evidence that anyone was ever killed at high noon. Those celebrated as heroic shooters have been blown out of proportion: Billy the Kid is reputed to have killed 21 by the time he was 21. Historian Eugene Hollow can only account for three; Bat Masterson is credited with 20 or 30 men killed. The actual number is three. Wild Bill Hickock was to have killed 6 Kansas outlaws. He lied; he only killed three, all unarmed. Cody himself stated in a letter to his publisher that he did not much care for the truth.

Happy and Insightful Reading,

Arnoldo Carlos Vento, PhD