

Crystal Meth: Coming to Green Map Near You!

Posted by

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PEJ News - Derek M. Book - I was taking my daughter to a playgroup at a local YMCA, and they had a "Green Map" on the wall. It was a neat map which showed all the positive aspects of a community, such as "eco-spiritual places," and "Organic Produce Location," along with special wildlife and cycling trails. Looking at this colourful document, I was struck by how powerful geography is. One would think by looking at this map that Victoria is a peaceful, ecologically sensitive, and generally wonderful place to live. I can safely say that Victoria is one of the nicest places I've lived in, but my consciousness shares this idealic fantasy with other more sinister facts.

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Derek M. Book

PEJ News

January 20, 2007

I have been mapping homelessness and drug addiction in Victoria for a while now, first with the 2005 homeless count, and now with the "rig dig" program at AIDS Vancouver Island. I know a different side of Victoria. I know that Crystal Meth is only in the first wave of its' deadly attack on Victoria. I think people understand that Crystal Meth is dangerous, but I'm not sure if they fully comprehend the scope of the problem.

For example, most people think that cocaine injection users are actually on cocaine! This is a severely outdated idea; Cocaine has, for many years, been cut with so much meth that the effects of actual cocaine are minimal. Remember, cocaine was seen by many as the "gentleman's drug." The body gyrations, the open bleeding sores on the faces, and the violent behaviours exhibited by supposed cocaine injectors are new. They are the effects of Crystal Meth.

Older homeless men and women who would share a bottle under a bridge in the past are now lining up to get rigs at the needle exchange (a "rig" is a needle). Crystal Meth is cheaper and easier to get than alcohol.

Kids who frequent "raves" (which are simply called "parties" now), buy what they think is ecstasy, and end up on meth, because real ecstasy is quite rare. Recent drug seizures have shown that as much as 70% of what is sold as ecstasy is actually meth.

Here in the ecovillage of Victoria, the amount of crystal meth babies (babies born addicted to

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meth) is [doubling every year](#) , according to Suzanne Germaine of Victoria General Hospital.

Maybe we need a new map of Victoria, a "Black Map" which has little syringes, homeless camps, and addictions resources (if there were any-- there are currently **NO DETOX BEDS FOR THE CRYSTAL METH USERS IN VICTORIA**

). Maybe activism needs a new face. Perhaps the reason why the hippy-funk music and fashion has been replaced by neo-punk is right in front of us: The future of politics will be dominated by a harsh look at what is really happening as opposed to some idealic fantasy of what could be.

"In a crooked little town, they were lost and never found
Fallen leaves, fallen leaves, fallen leaves... on the ground

I hitched a ride, until the coast
To leave behind, all of my ghosts
Searching for something, I couldn't find at home

Can't get no job, can you spare a dime?
Just one more hit, and I'll be fine
I swear to God, this'll be my one last time!

In a crooked little town, they were lost and never found
Fallen leaves, fallen leaves, fallen leaves... on the ground
Run away before you drown, or the streets will beat you down
Fallen leaves, fallen leaves, fallen leaves... on the ground"

-Billy Talent

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=af3RjDntlhs>