

COLORADO

CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2006

at the Wynkoop Brewing Company

<http://www.wynkoop.com/>

Corner of 18th and Wynkoop in LoDo, Denver

About a block from Light Rail. Thirteen minutes by foot from Auraria.

FROM CELLS TO SOCIETY: THE SCIENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

Christian Hopper, MD

**Associate Professor, Division of Substance Dependence,
Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, UCDHSC**

Drug and alcohol abuse has historically been seen as a failure of morals. The scientific approach to the problem has revealed a more complex picture. Of the quadrillions of chemical compounds that exist, only a very small number are voluntarily self-administered, to the point sometimes of continued self-administration even in the face of adverse consequences. These few classes of compounds all act on specific brain sites and mimic naturally occurring compounds that are involved in the brain's "reward system" which are important for survival. We can review the scientific understanding of what "Substance Dependence" or addiction involves. And we can briefly discuss issues in drug control policy; all substances which have abuse potential are regulated to some extent, and there are pros and cons to different regulation policies. The ongoing Colorado controversy about marijuana is an illustrative point of whether an illegal substance which in small quantities is already more quasi-illegal than illegal, should be quasi-legalized.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME. The discussion starts at 6:30 in the Mercantile Room (no food service there). Come before 6 PM to leave yourself time to get something to eat, or stay and eat afterwards. We end around 8 PM.

There's no charge. The Wynkoop is generously providing the facility; we buy our own drinks. It is first come, first seated, and **seating is limited** so that everyone can take part in the discussion.

The Colorado Café Scientifique is organized by an informal group of President's Teaching Scholars and faculty from CU and institutions up and down the Front Range, as well as science fans from industry, government and elsewhere. We welcome your input, including ideas for speakers and topics. Bring them with you to the next Café, or e-mail them and any questions to John.Cohen@UCHSC.edu

Essential information on our Web site at <http://CafeSciColorado.org>