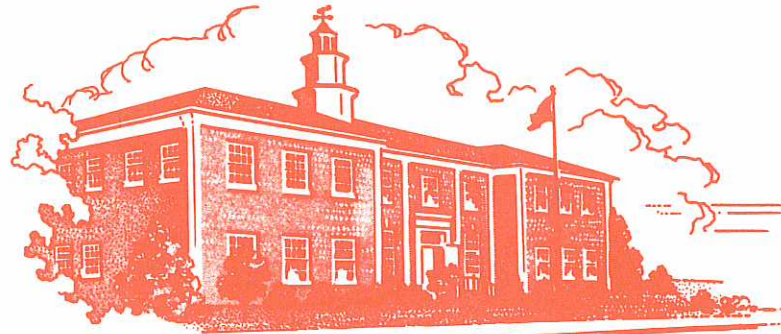


Town of Vienna, Virginia



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Special Issue

NEWSLETTER

March, 1969

MARIHUANA AND DRUG ABUSE

"The enemy of narcotic addiction is education ...
It's friend ... ignorance!"



A recent newspaper story reported that fifteen juveniles, aged 13 to 17, have been arrested in Vienna since Jan. 16 and charged with violation of Virginia narcotics laws. Six of the arrested were boys and nine girls, all from upper or upper-middle class families. Five 15-year old girls had been using heroin. A 17-year-old boy was selling hashish, a more potent type of marihuana. The other eight had been using other prohibited drugs.

The "it can't happen here" way of thinking must now change to, "it is happening here." It is time for every adult who has so far tried to ignore the problem, to become informed on drugs, their abuses, what to look for, and what to do about it. An informed citizenry, in the final analysis is the most effective deterrent to drug abuse.

MARIHUANA

Marihuana, the so-called "harmless drug," is the one to which young people seem to have easiest access. This is, as a rule, where it all begins.

Marihuana is a drug found in the flowering tops and leaves of the Indian hemp plant (*cannabis sativa*.) The plant grows in mild climates in countries around the world, including the United States, where the drug is known as pot, tea, grass, weed, Mary Jane and other names. The smoke from marihuana is harsh, and smells like burnt rope or dried grasses. It's sweetish odor is easily recognized.

Although it has been known for 5000 years, marihuana is little understood, and no medicinal use has been found for it. It was introduced into the United States as an intoxicating drug in 1920 and its general use outlawed in 1937 by the Federal Marihuana Tax Act. In the mid 1960's authorities reported a sharp increase in the use of marihuana. Arrests have more than doubled since 1960 according to the President's Commission on crime.

EFFECTS OF MARIHUANA

The drug acts on the brain and central nervous system when smoked. It affects the user's motion and thinking. The physical effects include rapid

Fellow Citizens of Vienna:

The newsletter speaks for itself. Drug abuse is a problem we must face here and now, and parents must above all keep alert and informed in order to protect their children.

I still feel, as I have always felt, that the majority of our children are good, clean youngsters of whom we may be justly proud. The danger remains that even these may be induced to "go along" with the crowd, to "try it for kicks." Therefore, parents must be ever vigilant in their behalf.

As a parent, and as Mayor, I share the concern, and the very real fear of all citizens at the enormity of this new problem we now face, and which we have so little experience in dealing with. I join with them in a prayer that the right solutions will be found.

Sincerely yours,

James C. Martinelli
James C. Martinelli
Mayor

DRUG

ABUSE



Town of Vienna, Virginia
127 Center Street, South
Vienna, Virginia 22180

NEWSLETTER

Special Issue

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DRUG ABUSE

Incorporated in 1890

heart beat, lowering of body temperatures and reddening of the eyes. The drug also changes blood sugar levels and dehydrates the body. Users will have an enormous appetite after a smoke, particularly for sweets and will be very thirsty.

Users get talkative, loud, unsteady or drowsy and find it hard to coordinate their movements. After a dose equal to 10 cigarettes they may experience hallucinations or delusions. The range of effects can vary from depression to a feeling of excitement. It is harder to make decisions that require clear thinking. It does not disable as alcohol does, so driving a car becomes hazardous, with time and space concepts distorted.

Pot parties are common among groups of high school and college students. It carries with it the excitement of doing something illegal and rebelling against authority. Fortunately, most youngsters who try pot give it up after the novelty wears off and they realize that the "kicks" they get aren't worth the risks and the side effects.

DANGERS

Cannabis often attracts the mentally unstable and may precipitate temporary psychosis (insanity) in predisposed individuals. Although there is no evidence that marihuana causes any lasting physical or mental changes, recent studies indicate that hashish - a stronger cousin of marihuana may do so.

Marihuana creates "dependence" rather than "addiction". Its chief danger lies in the fact that its effects are not intense, and the user may want greater "kicks" and try stronger drugs, including heroin. Then too, users of one drug may be exposed to a variety of them through contacts with sellers and other users.

Deprivation of marihuana may result in anxiety, restlessness, irritability or even a state of depression which may result in suicidal fantasies or actual attempts.

Drugs can injure vital parts of the body, the liver, the kidneys, the heart, the brain. Drug dependence can cripple its victims in body and mind -- in some cases permanently.

MARIHUANA LINKED TO CRIME

Studies indicate that marihuana has been a factor in many crimes, either as a primary cause or as a result of the liberation of inhibitions. Some evidence is presented that individuals may have prior criminal tendencies, which are exaggerated after continued use of marihuana.

The emotionally unstable person - the one most likely to resort to drugs as a crutch - is often driven over the edge into psychosis by their use and may resort to criminal violence, or, as we mentioned, suicide.

THE LAW

Regardless of how harmless a person may consider marihuana, it is against the law. A person found guilty of illegal possession of the drug may be sentenced to a probationary term of not less than two nor more than 10 years imprisonment for the first offense.

Numerous injustices have occurred in enforcing the narcotic and marijuana laws, particularly with the one-time or occasional user. Many jurists refrain



DRUG ABUSE IN THE COUNTY

According to Mr. John Zelaska, head of the Fairfax County Intelligence Squad, in 1966 there were 92 narcotics cases reported in the County with 16 arrests. In 1967 there were 259 cases reported with 34 arrests. In 1968 there were 410 cases reported with 86 arrests. In 1969 the estimated figure will double or more than double the number of cases and arrests.

The age of drug users is from 15 to 22 today. Five years ago a complaint of this kind from a high school was unheard of. Now complaints are being received from Intermediate schools.

Most of the cases to date have involved the use of marihuana. However, during the last six months there has been a marked increase of cases involving heroin. Kids who were smoking marihuana last year are now trying stronger drugs. Mr. Zelaska said.

He feels that one of the reasons for the growth in drug abuse has been the publicity it has received from doctors and other prominent people who have said that there is nothing wrong with taking drugs. Drugs have also become a status symbol among a youngster's peers. Many a cache confiscated by the vice squad, that high schoolers were peddling for LSD, contained nothing but laxatives, vitamin tablets, birth control pills or even aspirin compounds. Some young people even manage a psychological kick from such things.

Many drug abusers are unstable, and are looking for a crutch, says Mr. Zelaska. They may find a coffin. "I have never seen a heroin addict over 41", he stated. "If they haven't kicked the habit, they're dead before then, from infection caused by unsterile needles or lowered resistance, or from the organic deterioration caused by the drug."

THE DRUG PROBLEM IN VIENNA

Major Vernon L. Jones of Vienna, finds the greatest incidence of drug abuse in the Town to be among the 15-17 age group. He feels that greater parental concern is necessary to control the use of drugs.

Among the heroin users charged by Vienna Police, one had a collapsed vein from prolonged use of the needle, another had developed severe hepatitis from using an unclean needle. In these and other cases, Major Jones said that had parents been vigilant, they should have realized what was happening before such disabilities developed.

Several members of the Vienna force are attending a University Extension course in Drug Abuse at the Vienna Community Center.

The principals of both Vienna high schools, Shelton T. Belches of James Madison, and T. Page Johnson of Oakton, are concerned over the increase in drug abuse among high school students. Both said that while there have been no actual incidents involving drug use or the sale of drugs within the school that have come to their attention, the number of incidents they investigate, that might involve drug use, are on the increase.

Certainly, they agreed, talk about and interest in drugs has increased in the schools. Both principals blame the rising use of drugs by young people on their mobility, (most have cars and are able to drive to Georgetown, or wherever drugs are readily available), on affluence and on a permissive society.

WARNING FOR PARENTS

Even your child might try narcotics through ignorance or curiosity, on a dare or just to "go along" with his group. Disunity in the home and unhappiness may cause him to turn to narcotics.

The following is a pattern most children follow when becoming users of narcotics: A child shows a change in personality and drops old friends for new ones. He changes his time schedule for home and outside activities. He needs too much money and cannot account for the way he has spent it. Money disappears from purses and valuable things vanish from the home, etc.

The child withdraws from family companionship. He yawns and is listless. He spends an unreasonable amount of time in the bathroom or alone or with a companion and could be taking "shots" of drugs. He insists upon keeping his arms covered at all times because there are injection marks that he does not want to reveal. Pupils of his eyes may be either too small or too large, and he may wear dark glasses even inside the house.

These indications may reveal a pattern of narcotics addiction. Professional observation may be in order.



* * *

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you do know someone who is dependent on drugs -- get medical attention for him. Proper medical care is the first essential step. Chances for recovery are better if treatment is started early.

If you are aware of illegal traffic in drugs, give accurate information to your Police Department.

Be concerned about your children, aware of what they do and alert to danger signals. Try to develop strength and independence in children. Help them to see beauty and meaning in the world as it is and to develop emotional and spiritual resources.

* * *

WHAT THE TOWN AND COUNTY ARE DOING

The County's Adult Education Program initiated a course this year, for parents and teachers on "Drugs and their Abuse". About 500 turned out for the initial program at George Marshall high school. The non-fee course is being conducted by the Fairfax County Public Schools' Adult Education Department in conjunction with Commonwealth's Attorney Robert F. Horan, Jr., Enrico Davoli M. D. of the Northern Virginia Pediatrics Society and Carl Crimm, M.D., of the Fairfax County Medical Society.

The course teaches identification and drug symptoms in the four meetings. Citizens interested in forming another class in March or later in the Spring should phone Mr. George Layne at 273-4414.

Bob Horan has also given talks before student and PTA groups at both Oakton and Madison high schools. In Vienna, Detective Thomas Payne has spoken on Drug Abuse before many local clubs and groups. Both Vienna high schools have a program on drug education as a part of their Physical Education program, and are working on ways to update and improve it. Members of the faculty at both schools also attend the Adult Education Course mentioned above.

In Fairfax County, the seven member team comprising the vice squad were almost totally employed in fighting narcotics last year. Their members gave 292 talks to schools, civic and church groups.

from imposing the maximum penalties permitted by law except for pushers, distributors and syndicated operators.

OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS

Certain classes of depressants, morphine-like drugs (heroin etc.), barbiturate-like drugs and alcohol are addictive. The intense discomfort associated with abrupt withdrawal of these drugs will create such a need that the user will resort to crime for his supply.

Other drugs -- cocaine, the amphetamines, LSD, marihuana and other hallucinogens are not addictive, yet the user may become so dependent psychologically on these drugs that the drive to continue their use is no less strong.

Barbiturate abuse resembles alcohol intoxication but is far more dangerous than alcohol or even narcotics. Unintentional overdosage can easily occur. Convulsions which may follow withdrawal can be fatal. The combination of alcohol and barbiturates may result in fatal depression of respiratory and cardiovascular systems.

LSD primarily affects the central nervous system producing changes in mood and behaviour. The user may exhibit dilated pupils, tremor, elevated temperature and blood pressure and hyperactive reflexes.

Genetic damage has been linked to LSD. In animal experiments, a definite alteration in genes was noticed in those who had been given the drug. There is suspicion that spontaneous abortion as well as malformations in the newborn may be traced to the use of LSD.

There is also a danger of delayed psychotic reaction to the drug. Hallucinations have recurred weeks after the drug was taken. LSD has been called "chemical Russian roulette." Some of the observed effects have been anemia, damage to kidneys, liver, heart, blood and nervous system.

WHY DO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE USE DRUGS?

Regrettably the trend has been encouraged by a small number of misguided but highly articulate spokesmen, who have attempted to justify or excuse the use of such drugs. As a consequence, many impressionable young persons have been led to experiment with marihuana.

Prophets of the drug make fantastic claims regarding it as a "benevolent herb" which may lead its users to profound philosophic truths, greater social intimacy and keener artistic expression. The user may experience such feelings, and feel capable of great things, however these are fantasies, and rather than produce tangible results, only lead the user to desire more and more withdrawal from reality.

Some take drugs to shut out the real world or to enter a world of unreality. Often young people see drug abuse as an adventure -- a road to supposedly new experience. Many have not learned how to develop and enjoy their senses without artificial stimulation.

