

In Ecstasy's shadow: 'It's like every sense is magnified 500 times'

by Ellen Creager
Knight-Ridder Tribune
April 17, 2001

At raves, the prom and just for the hell of it, Logan Corcoran took Ecstasy.

Now she's worried. But not for herself.

"I hear about these really good kids who never smoked weed and never drank, and they're like, 'Oh, I don't do anything bad,'" says Logan, 17, of Walled Lake, Mich.

"But they do Ecstasy." While adults were looking the other way, the alluring little illegal stimulant with the cute nickname has hooked its tentacles into teenagers.

About three years ago, it burst the boundaries of gay bars, techno clubs and dances called underground raves. Now Ecstasy (3,4-methylenedioxy methamphetamine, or MDMA), is on the loose from middle schools to colleges.

"Ecstasy is acceptable. It is as common as pot. I can't imagine anywhere in the state you can't get a hold of it," says Kevin Franklin, 21, of Taylor, Mich., who goes to techno clubs and has friends who use it. "It's just so common people don't even have conversations about it anymore."

But when use of a drug nearly doubles among high schoolers in just two years, adults get scared.

On one hand, the glamorous image of Ecstasy remains, and its casual use is on the rise.

On the other hand, the ugly is beginning to show.

This story is about Ecstasy's inroads into the lives of our teenagers. Mostly, it is about a black-haired girl, her mother, a retired cop and a rave.

When Logan loved Ecstasy, no one

could have talked her out of using it. "I had plenty of people telling me drugs were bad, and this bad thing is going to happen to you," she remembers. "But I didn't care."

When Logan was 14, she ran away to underground rave parties in Detroit to dance and do drugs, often returning home to her frantic parents two or three days later.

Ecstasy was her hobby. "There's no way you can describe how it affects you. It's like every sense is magnified 500 times, and everything seems so real," says Logan. "It's illogical that even a Snapple bottle can be so beautiful and profound and perfect. But that's the way it makes you feel."

Logan would go to raves every Saturday night, where "pretty much everyone there was either rolling (high) or looking for a pill," she says. "At raves, it doesn't matter if you're 14. There's no doorman checking IDs."

Logan does not remember where she got the money for Ecstasy. But she was never afraid.

"Ecstasy has that effect on you," she says. "Someone can pull a gun on you, and you wouldn't even be scared."

As she combined Ecstasy with LSD, cocaine and other drugs, her life spiraled out of control. Logan got treatment, but she relapsed 20 or 30 times.

"I'd think I'd be doing really good. I'd say, 'I'll just do a little bit of Ecstasy or coke or acid,'" she says. "But prom night 1999, I went nuts."

That night in the car, Logan and her date each took two tablets of Ecstasy and six or seven gels of LSD. She has no memory of what happened after that. She found herself at home on the floor, begging her parents for help. Twenty months ago, she got clean for



KNIGHT-RIDDER TRIBUNE/J. KYLE KEENER

At "Refueling," an all night rave in a non-descript building near Eastern Market in Detroit, where drugs like ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, marijuana and other drugs where being used openly, the crowd dances to a techno beat.

good.

For someone who did so many drugs, Logan is strangely alarmed at the idea of "good" kids or younger kids trying Ecstasy. She tries to warn them, "but they sit there rolling their eyes waiting for me to finish," she says. "Maybe one in 20 pay attention."

"A lot of my friends still do drugs. I'll tell them, 'Look, I'm not going to lie about Ecstasy. It was one of the best feelings you ever had in your life, but it's not worth it. You can't do it just once. And after you try it once, you don't really care how dangerous it is.'"

Logan should be a high school senior, but she only has enough credits to be a sophomore. Last fall, she dropped out of high school. She wants to get her GED.

"She always wanted to be a marine biologist," says her mother, Patricia Corcoran. "Now she says she

want to be a cosmetologist."

In some ways, Ecstasy is the perfect 21st-century drug for a generation raised on Ritalin and Prozac. It is nonviolent. There's no unhealthy smoking. It won't make you fat. Its effect is the ultimate in positive thinking.

Half the users are girls.

It reminds Walled Lake Central High School student assistance coordinator Lynn Kalish of LSD in the 1960s. It reminds government drug experts of cocaine in the early 1980s.

Although the state keeps no statistics, area high school counselors are seeing increasing Ecstasy use all the way down to middle school by teens who normally would not use drugs.

One Michigan high school surveyed its students last fall and found 10 percent had tried it. That is nearly identical to new national figures, which show a doubling of use be-

tween 1998 and 2000 among high school seniors, to 11 percent.

Katie Atkinson, 15, of White Lake Township, says any student can get Ecstasy at a high school.

"Want me to go get some?" asks the former user. "I'll be right back."

She laughs, but she is not kidding.

College students have lower substance abuse rates than other young adults. But colleges are seeing a rise in use, too. Michigan State University data indicate that 10 percent of its students have tried Ecstasy. University of Michigan officials expect a survey this spring to yield use levels similar to MSU's.

College students talk about using the drug responsibly.

"I like feeling happier than I could ever possibly feel in real life," says a 19-year-old U-M student, who uses Ecstasy once a month but did not want to be identified for fear of her parents finding out.

"I'm not really afraid anything bad will happen to me since I'm decently picky where I get my drugs."

And in one of those Generation Y, only-in-America quirks, a drug-neutral group called DanceSafe Detroit will test your Ecstasy for you, to make sure it is really MDMA. A Detroit-based pro-Ecstasy Web site gives tips on how to ward off brain damage with magnesium and vitamin C.

Even some professionals warn Ecstasy is not worth a breathless panic.

"I've been in this job 23 years, and we've had a lot of drug scares," says Sgt. Michael Lemon, head of the drug education unit in the Detroit Police narcotics division. While not downplaying the seriousness of the problem, he says, "compared to other drugs, we don't have cause for alarm."

But warning bells are ringing.

Like other drugs, many pills passed off as Ecstasy can be cut with inert fillers or poison. Only 25 percent of the Ecstasy that DanceSafe tested at one rave in Detroit in January was really MDMA.

"That night we found things like ketamine and PMA and over-the-counter medication," says Doris Payer, 21, DanceSafe Detroit president and a U-M senior who used to use the drug. "I don't think it's people's intention to go kill themselves."

Ketamine is a veterinary anesthetic and PMA is a lethal hallucinogen.

Ecstasy has such a pleasant name, but it keeps company with such mean friends -- LSD, cocaine, heroin, the date-rape drug GHB, PMA and ketamine. Mixing Ecstasy with alcohol and other drugs is so common there are even names for those who do it.

Katie Atkinson, now recovering, was a "candy flipper" who mixed Ecstasy and LSD.

"I tripped and rolled, LSD and Ecstasy. I'd take two hits and two pills," she says. Eventually, she moved on to other drugs.

At 15, Katie never went to a rave. She was never even old enough to get into a club. But getting Ecstasy and LSD near home was easy.

For other drugs, "I'd go to Outer Drive," says the slim, brown-haired White Lake Township teen.

"I could get acid from around here, but I'd go there for coke and heroin. How did she know where to go?"

"Once you're down there, they find you."

Adobe Systems employee sentenced for pirating software while a student at University of Oregon

by Billy O'Keefe
TMS Campus
April 18, 2001

A University of Oregon graduate was sentenced this week to a year in prison and ordered to pay a major software company more than \$87,000 in compensation after admitting to illegally distributing copies of the company's software while a student.

Investigators argued that 21-year-old Jeffery Alan Stockton cost Adobe Systems, Inc., publishers of such popular software as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, more than \$490,000 in lost sales, according to court documents.

Court documents further revealed that Stockton, who graduated in 2000 with a degree in journalism, created fake serial numbers and instruction manuals to complement the copied software, and conducted much of his business with fellow students.

An employer of Stockton's discovered the illegal software in 1999 during a routine checkup of employee inventory. Investigators raided Stockton's apartment in January 2000 and confiscated software, computer equipment and more than \$13,000 cash.

Under terms of the sentencing, Stockton will be on probation for three years following his prison sentence. During that time, authorities will have access to Stockton's financial records and his computer.

Stockton is also required to receive a psychiatric evaluation after investigators found images containing child pornography on his computer. In the meantime, he is prohibited from interacting with minors without prior approval.

Stockton currently volunteers some of his time working with minors at a local church.

Noise patrol angers Indiana University students

TMS Campus
April 17, 2001

A new program may be keeping the Indiana University campus quiet but the sound of groaning students is only getting louder.

Since the inception of the quiet nights initiative last summer, which is designed to quiet loud parties in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus, Bloomington police have given students 181 tickets at \$50 a pop.

From Thursday through Sunday, police patrol the streets with the windows in their patrol cars rolled down. If they come across a home blaring loud music, they log the address into a computer and return 15 minutes later. If the noise still exists, each resident of the house who is home is given a ticket.

Indiana student Phil Presser, 19, said the noise initiative is too aggressive for a student neighborhood.

"This is a college campus," Presser told the Associated Press. "It should be fun. It's all right if neighbors complain, but I don't think [the police] should just stop by for no reason."

While the tickets will generate some revenue for the city, the program hardly pays for itself. The city has allotted \$44,000 for officers to take on overtime hours to patrol during the weekend shifts.

Despite student complaints, Bloomington police Capt. Mike Diekhoff said the initiative is doing its job.

"The whole goal behind quiet nights was to make living in a neighborhood if you are a residential property owner, rather than a renter, more livable," Diekhoff told the Associated Press.

Company behind VoyeurDorm goes to court in bid to webcast McVeigh execution

by Billy O'Keefe
TMS Campus
April 17, 2001

The Internet company that created VoyeurDorm.com, a campus voyeur site featuring a house full of college girls and Web cams, requested permission Tuesday from a federal judge to show live video of the May 16 execution of Timothy McVeigh, the man responsible for the bombings six years ago in Oklahoma City.

The Entertainment Network Inc. argues that people have a First Amendment right to watch the execution. Presently, audio and video-recording equipment is prohibited at an execution, although presence of the media is allowed.

The judge will issue a decision sometime this week.

ENI has asked permission to either transmit a live feed of the closed-circuit broadcast of McVeigh's execution or film the execution itself. As it stands now, the closed-circuit broadcast will be available only to families of the victims.

ENI said that if granted permission to broadcast the execution, it will employ the same parental controls used to prevent children from visiting its other sites, the most notable of which is VoyeurDorm, a subscription-based site featuring 75 live feeds of female college students under one roof.

Additionally, ENI said it will charge users of the site \$1.95 to view the Webcast, and donate all proceeds to charities established by families of the victims.

we throw all kinds of **[obstacles]** at you.
tuition isn't one of them.

Sheer cliffs, rope bridges, final exams. With obstacles like these in your way, tuition's the last thing you should have to worry about. But if you qualify, you can get a 2- or 3-year Army ROTC scholarship that'll help make life easier over the long haul. Talk to your Army ROTC representative. And get a leg up on your future.

ARMY ROTC Unlike any other college course you can take.
TWO YEAR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE.
CALL MAJOR ZANJUS — 898-7279.