

Pot Smokers: America's Newest Endangered Species

By Soni Moore

Scientists, now able to confirm a few nationwide studies on America's second leading recreational drug (alcohol is #1), marijuana, have come up with concrete evidence of the damaging effects to the brain, lungs, heart, and reproductive and immunity systems of our pot-smoking young Americans.

Over the past twenty years, American teen-agers, usually the one group in the prime of health, are the only age group in the United States who have suffered from deteriorating health. This time span exactly coincides with the virtual epidemic of marijuana use among young people. According to the experts, marijuana is the single most dangerous health hazard of American youth today. A variety of symptoms showing up in young pot smokers that are usually associated with middle and old age include coughs, rales, moderate to severe chest pains, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and short-term memory loss. In a recent study of 1000 U.S. soldiers stationed in West Germany, heavy cannabis ("pot") smoking produced sinusitis, pharyngitis, bronchitis, asthma, and other respiratory disorders in a year or less. The chronic bronchitis and emphysema, not unusual in 45- or 50-year-olds, was very evident in these hashish smokers who were 18 years old!

Studies now show damaging effects from pot smoking suggestive of long-term health hazards to various body functions as well as the immediate effects, such as those related to the brain. We already know marijuana "highs" impair memory, learning, speech, reading comprehension, arithmetic problem-solving, and the ability to think. Persistent brain abnormalities and emotional/behavioral changes have been demonstrated in monkeys given large doses of marijuana. There is strong evidence of psychological addiction for the pot smoker. Highly significant dose-related impairments of lung function were found in a study of 28 otherwise healthy young men who averaged five "joints" a day for 47 to 59 days.

Marijuana smoking irritates the air passages, increases airway resistance, contributes to the development of pre-malignant and malignant lesions of lung cells, decreases the vital air capacity, and enhances -- by some 200 percent -- enzymes that potentially contribute to the "eating" or digesting of the lung itself! The body's immunity, or defense, system was studied in 51 young chronic pot smokers, average age 22, each smoking about four "joints" a week for approximately four years. The normal 70 percent T-cells in the lymphocytic defense system was found to be 41 percent lower in the cannabis smokers as compared with the 81 non-pot-smoking control group, average age 44. This and other studies show that marijuana inhibits the build-up of the body's defense system against infection and also suppresses its ability to take action when needed. Marijuana's negative actions on the heart include narrowing the coronary arteries, decreasing the oxygen supply, increasing the carbon monoxide supply, weakening the pumping action of the heart muscle, and, of course, significantly increasing the pulse and blood pressure rates.

In 40 percent of the females studied, an adverse effect on the menstrual cycle has appeared in those women who smoke pot at least four times a week. This may result in infertility. Marijuana reduced estrogen and progesterone levels in animal studies and has crossed the placenta and reached the developing fetus in pregnant monkeys with resulting abortions and dead babies.

Marijuana can reduce the sperm count and produce sperm abnormalities in men. Studies show that male hashish smokers also have lower levels of testosterone in their blood than their non-pot-smoking control group.

Current studies at Columbia University show that marijuana has an effect on the body's master gland, the hypothalamus, which directs the functions of other hormone-producing glands.

The 1979 National High School Senior Survey showed that 13 percent of daily users (one out of 10) smoke more

than seven "joints" a day; the other 87 percent average 3 1/2 "joints" a day. Of the 51 percent of pot-smoking seniors, 43 percent are getting "higher" for longer periods nowadays.

A little better understanding of what we do and don't know about marijuana may be helpful in deciding on whether "to smoke or not to smoke" at this point...

Cannabinoids are the chemicals found only in the cannabis plant, from which marijuana and hashish are prepared. THC, tetrahydrocannabinol, is a group of compounds found exclusively in the cannabis plant. The cannabinoid chemicals make up only a fraction of the 421 known chemicals in the plant, with new ones constantly being identified. Of the 61 cannabinoids identified in pot so far, only a handful have been studied. Of those studied, all are biologically active, some are psychoactive. Five percent of

the chief psychoactive cannabinoid, THC (delta-9-THC), which appears in all body fluid tests, crosses the blood-brain barrier -- creating highs (and causing problems). To date, we don't know what the other 95 percent is doing to the body!

Confiscated marijuana samples in the U.S. in 1975 contained 0.4 percent of the mind-altering THC chemical. The average street pot samples in 1979 showed a tenfold potency increase to four percent and some "home-grown" varieties contained up to 7 percent THC per "joint."

Are our youth "going to pot?" Is pot going to your head? Is the short-term high worth the long-term risk?

Sources: *New York Times*, Wednesday, May 21, 1980 "The Evidence Builds Against Marijuana" by J.E.Brady, and *The Reader's Digest*, November 1980 "Marijuana Alert II: More of the Grim Story" by P. Mann.

More Wumke

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\$2 deposit on pitchers at Thirsty's. But my sources have given me a pretty good idea of who the culprits are. Don't let me see you carry anything that is not yours out of that bar. You don't know what I look like. I just may be bigger than you. Enough said!

Are the residence hall RAs getting the shaft again this year on their fee reductions? I'll let you know next time. Stay tuned.

Keep up the good work, Reader staff. I like what I see. And nobody asked me, but aren't the 1980 Philadelphia Phillies the greatest thing you ever saw? They're far better than anything that other side of the state could produce. (Does Leonard value his life much?)

One more thing: I consider myself a very apathetic person, but I voted Tuesday. Just thought I'd mention it. Be talking to youse later. Until then, I remain

LEONARD WUMKE

Bomb intended for Iranian student

Campus Digest News Service

The student president of the Iranian Student Association at Ohio State University was apparently the target for an unsuccessful Molotov-cocktail bombing last week.

Investigators said that the firebomb had been thrown near the window of an apartment occupied by Behzad Bavarian and his wife.

The bomb struck the wall of the apartment building and fell to the ground where it was extinguished.

No damage or injuries were reported.

More Longing

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There is only one program of study at Capitol Campus that can boast an entire building of its own.

There is only one program of study at Capitol Campus that has a mural painted on the cafeteria wall that screams its identity at you every time you look up from your sandwich.

So far, one academic program has given its majors a sense of belonging.

Speaking for myself as one not a member of the above academic program, I am left with a deep sense of "not belonging" to Capitol Campus.

Every time I sit down in "our" cafeteria to eat lunch I reassess the value of my academic program. No, my program doesn't have the stringent academic requirements as the one that's advertised on the wall. My program doesn't follow any scientific pattern. My program doesn't prepare me for a specific occupation.

In fact there isn't much of a demand for majors in my program. And, on the whole, graduates from my program can't command salaries like those whose program is advertised on the wall.

That sums it up. My program just can't be as important as the one on the wall. If it were, I'm sure the University would have depicted some symbol of my program on "our" cafeteria wall.

Well, maybe someday there will be a great need for graduates in my program and the University will designate a whole building to the honor of my program and paint us a mural in the cafeteria, and then I could feel I really belonged at Capitol Campus. Until that "someday," I wish someone would cover up that obnoxious monstrosity on the cafeteria wall and let me eat my lunch in peace!

K.J.V.

Diary Of A College Revolutionary

By Captain S.C. Anon

(Looks like the psycho promoted himself since last issue).

Monday, October 27

It's Monday. That means I only have four days to get ready for the weekend. I had a run-in with an Iranian student this morning. I wish they'd take them all away someplace and do something with them, like forming a clean up crew at TMI.

These Iranian characters really bug me; they always have to quote Major Winchester of the 4077th M.A.S.H., "My family has had trouble with immigrants ever since we came to this country."

I saw "The Vikings" on TV. It was great! Total rape and pillage. Kirk Douglas and his guys just sailed around, burning villages, kidnapping all the beautiful women, and killing everybody else. Then they took the captured women back to their place and threw axes at them. I must have been a Viking in a previous incarnation.

Tuesday, October 28

Oh my brothers! I went to viddy the sinny this evening at the Student Center. "A Clockwork Orange," my bro-

thers, complete with the ultraviolence, nagoy groodies, krovvy and of course the old in-out-in-out. And alas my brothers, my droogs and I did smeck and creech at such antics, and crark when it was over and no more shows were to be seen.

So here I sit oh my brothers, set with my moloko and synthemesc, devising my very own real horror show. One that your humble storyteller shall not soon forget.

Wednesday, October 29

I heard an "unofficial report" on ABC tonight that Ayatollah Khomeini was dying from cancer of the colon. That's not fair! He's mine! Six months ago Fritz and Zbrignew came to see me, saying that Jimmy wanted good old Ayatollah taken care of, but not for awhile as they had something in the works themselves. Well, what they had didn't work, but I haven't heard from them.

Saturday, November 1

I'm on my way back from the park after All University Day. It was excellent. I spent most of the game at a tailgate party, and I confess that I didn't want to leave. If I made a movie about my experience, I'd title it "Up in Smoke II."

Sunday, November 2

I'm in Iran. Jimmy was waiting for

me in person when I got back from the park. Air Force One was fueled and ready when we got to Harrisburg International. The specific means of my entry into Iran are classified, but this morning I was in position to pick off the senile Islamic nut when he came out for his morning denunciations.

As luck would have it, it rained and koo-koomanie did his denouncing indoors in front of a television camera. I would wait around and try again tomorrow, but I've go a test second period.

On the way to my escape jet, I came upon a small Iranian-Iraqi firefight. I couldn't decide which side to shoot at, since both were in my killing zone and I hated both sides. So I compromised by killing them all.

I wonder how the Eagles are doing.
Monday, November 3

Alas, it's Monday again and I'm back in Middletown. Jimmy called me this morning to say that it was OK that I didn't accomplish my mission, as Amy had changed her mind anyway. He said that I could keep the two million for my trouble.

The Governor called me today and said that if he were elected, he'd give me another chance at five million dollars.

My vote is cast. Wow, I only have four days to get ready for another weekend.