

State College narcs 'very busy'

By LINDA MILLER
Collegian Staff Writer

Yes, Virginia, there are narcs in State College. But the State College office of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Drug Control is no busier than the other seven corresponding regional offices, according to Director Walter F. Williams.

"We're all very busy — busier than we should be," Williams said. His badge states "Narcotic Agent," but Williams and his fellow bureau employees can make arrests for illegal selling, using or purchase of any controlled substance.

Williams said that although the bureau makes arrests in connection with all types of drug abuse, it concentrates its efforts on drug dealers, especially those involved with "harder drugs" and pushers dealing with large quantities of drugs and large sums of money.

He said figures are misleading and would not estimate any percentage of drug usage or trafficking in State College. But he said that trafficking in all types of drugs, including heroin, is present.

Williams said a large number of drug users are young, and therefore many students are arrested on drug charges. But the percentage of non-students arrested locally runs close to the percentage of student arrests.

"We don't pick on college students. We go where the trafficking is. We don't discriminate — we go after anyone and everyone," he said. The Bureau has no connection with the University and no state spies are stationed in the dorms, according to Williams.

The bureau does employ undercover agents who gather intelligence for many arrests and who do not consider the campus off-limits, he said. Bureau employees have the authority to travel anywhere within the Commonwealth, excluding military bases.

Williams said that undercover agents are needed because there is no complaining party in drug trafficking, as there are in robbery and assault cases.

The number of employees in his office fluctuates according to need. The State College office covers 13 surrounding counties, as well as Centre County.

State College was chosen as a regional office because of its central location. The office, 1315 S. Allen St., was located in

Bellefonte until 1973. At that time, the bureau was moved from the Health Department to the Justice Department.

The chain of command begins with the governor and his Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, which recommends drugs to be included on the controlled substance list. From there, the attorney general and deputy attorney general oversee the director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Drug Control, located in Harrisburg.

Two Criminal Compliance and Enforcement directors supervise the regional office directors.

The bureau works with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. Williams said their agents are often housed with the state police strike forces when both groups are working on the same investigation. Thus, the general public can contact local authorities concerning drug abuse.

"It's not really necessary for us to have marked cars and a big sign out in front of the building," he said.

Williams said the bureau likes publicity, but can only give limited information to the public.

The bureau may go for days or months without making an arrest, he said, adding that intelligence leading to arrests is strictly confidential.

Williams said he considers his occupation exciting, but it requires a lot of paper work. He said he used to go out and make arrests, but is now severely limited by his desk and telephone.

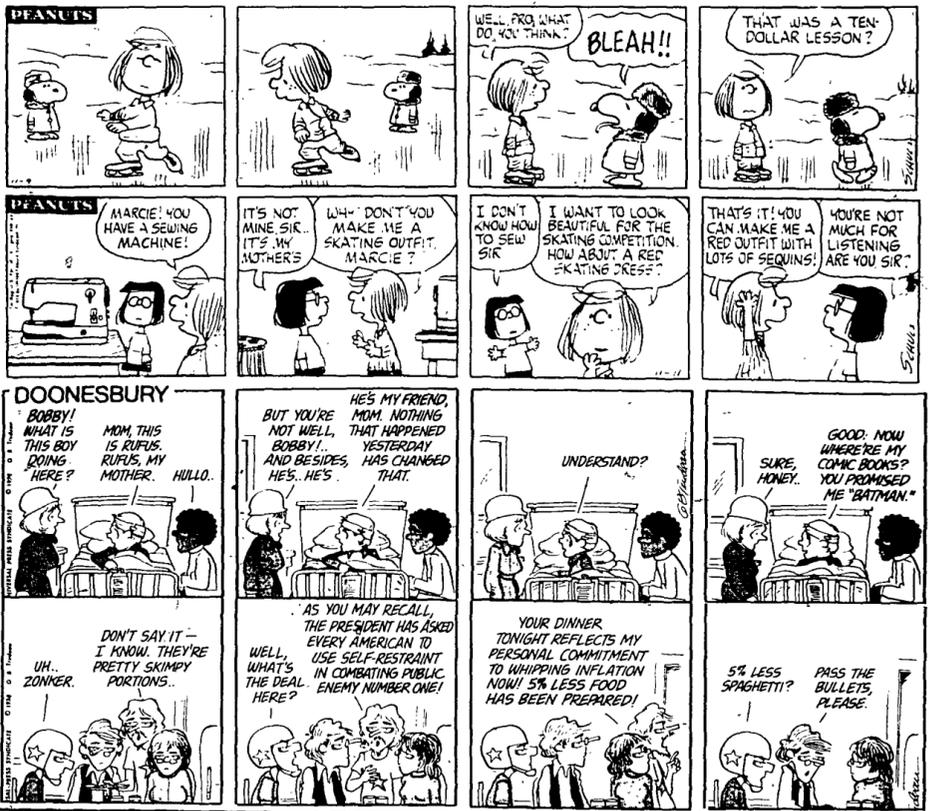
He said all agents are issued weapons because of the element of risk involved. However, danger is largely reduced by planning and research to choose times and places of arrests.

This cautiousness and a great respect for individual privacy and freedom from harassment have made the bureau a highly-regarded organization, Williams said, explaining that it has taken many years to build the bureau's reputation and the bureau would not jeopardize it by acting unprofessionally.

He said the "No-Knock policy" of entry used by federal agents is not used by the bureau.

"I don't do it for the money, although we get along comfortably. It's extremely rewarding...and at times it's very sad...you can see the misery first hand and what it does to families," he said.

Drug abuse costs millions of lives annually, he said.



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New course offered on Italian heritage

In response to the growth of ethnic awareness in this country a new Italian course will be offered Winter Term.

Italian 198, a three credit course designed by Beno Weiss, will be an examination of Italian heritage. Weiss said he expects the large number of students of Italian descent on campus to be particularly interested in the course.

The new course will present a general view of Italian life from the medieval period to the present and will deal largely with the history of Italian literature and arts and their contributions to our own culture.

"Italy has historically been the center of world culture," Weiss said.

The Italo-American experience also will be studied. "The 'melting pot' is a myth," said Weiss.

He claimed that ethnicity has always been a force in this country, but it had only become strong in the last few years.

"The first generations of immigrants because of socio-economic reasons grew ashamed of their heritage. Now recent generations are looking back with pride," Weiss said.

He credited the "black movement" for the ethnic reawakening.

The course will study the formation and development of the Italian character throughout history. It will emphasize the origins of certain national traits and their influence on Italian history, Weiss said.

"The nature of the Italian character has never been examined," said Weiss. He said the Mafia-type is not the true Italian character, contrary to popular belief.

The course will be run on an experimental basis but may be made permanent next year.

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