

Speaking of Drugs

By T. HARRIS & J. ORMAND

(Editor's Note: The authors of this weekly column are former drug addicts. They are now enrolled in a university and both are associated with a successful drug program.)

This is the first article of a series dealing with drug abuse and addiction, the rehabilitation process, and most significantly, the greater negative prevailing conditions of which drug abuse and addiction are more superficial manifestations.

The column will deal with four specific aspects that influence public consciousness concerning drugs. These four aspects are drug definition, drug effects, drug related behavior, and the drug experience.

Our ultimate goal is to enlighten our readers to the many positive and productive outlets available for sustaining a viable life as opposed to the negative orientation of drug abuse and addiction.

The average citizen in our society feels very helpless in terms of having some input into those decisions that affect his or her life. The economic situation is bleak, wages are remaining constant while prices are rising. Prevailing conditions demand more of our time to deal with survival needs. Once we begin to adjust to the increasing demands of survival, we simultaneously have to make certain mental adjustments. Very often making the adjustments necessary for survival may be a traumatic experience.

It is a neglected fact that all of us will be constantly undergoing change to keep pace with the demands of life. How we interpret and cope with these changes are of paramount concern.

In our attempts to cope with the pressures of life, we all form various superficial human dependencies. Drug use is one of the more prevalent aspects of the human dependencies; often stemming from a reaction to the anxieties produced by rapid change.

A study made by Resource Planning Corporation in March, 1974 of a 16 county region, including Forsyth County and Guilford County showed approximately 50,000 regular illegal drug users. However, the most striking statistics were dealing with abusers of legal or prescription drugs. There were nearly 41,000 users of legal drugs obtained without a prescription, but did not use the drug as prescribed. The most widely used abused of those legal drugs were relaxants or minor tranquilizers and barbituates. The largest single group of regular users of minor tranquilizers are unemployed females; 50 per cent of whom are housewives. According to the study the most likely to abuse barbituates are typically age 50 and above and unemployed.

We are not attempting to focus on one particular group or class, but to simply show how drugs, legal and illegal, have been commonly accepted by a cross section of our population as a means of coping. Regardless of how innocent our initial usage may be, dependencies are formed in this manner in many cases.

It must be pointed that most of the illegal drugs are used by the young. Most of the legal drugs are abused by older people with more responsibility than the younger age group. Due to most of the publicity received because of arrest and detectability, the illegal users have been the object of attention. Consequently, the abusers of legal drugs have been left to suffer with their indulgence.

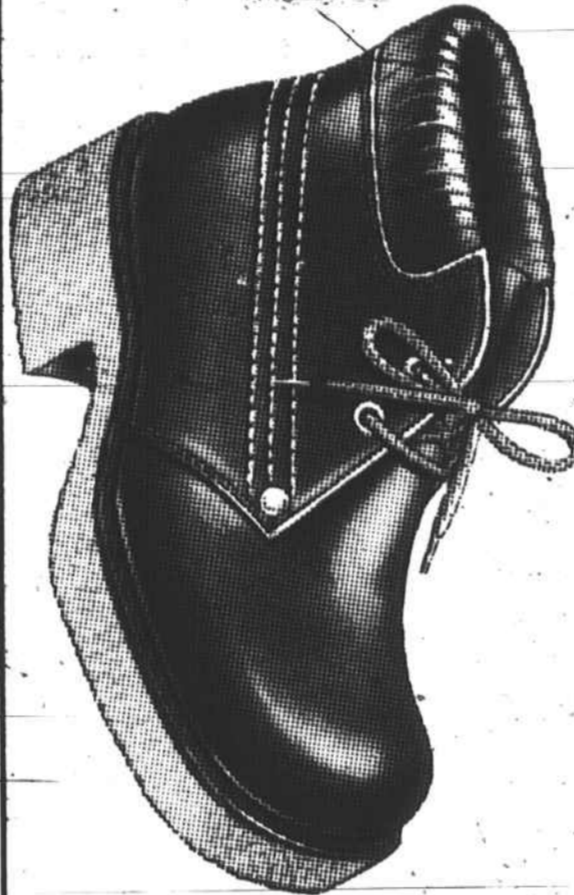
In future articles we will carefully examine every drug commonly used; legal and illegal, and the class or group primarily affected by each specific drug. It is hoped that we may offer many new insights into the many, mitigating conditions leading to drug dependency and also project practical and viable alternatives to this menacing problem that affects such a large percentage of our population; young and old, rich and poor.



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Albert D. Woodel, 34, of 3405 Lambeth St. was arrested Sept. 3 on a charge of marihuana possession, according to police reports. Police officers at the scene reported seeing a bag of "green vegetable material" lying on a chair in the living room of

the residence.

Woodel, a deaf mute, "began pointing to himself as if he was claiming the marihuana," the report charged.

He was arrested and placed in the county jail under \$200 bond. Trial has been set for Sept. 18.

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