

Marijuana is readily available to students

By Dana Manley
JC 225

Jane, an Elon junior, has been smoking marijuana for five years. She has used the drug occasionally in the past three years at Elon.

"I don't consider myself a 'pot-head' because I really don't smoke as much pot as people think," she said. "I know of people here who get high every day -- that's getting high every day for at least four or five years -- and that's a lot."

"Jane" smokes marijuana to put herself into a different frame of mind and suggests the reasons for using marijuana are similar to the reasons people drink alcohol.

On September 30, 1988, 314 students in 14 classes at Elon participated in a survey administered through the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"I'm not surprised by the results," said Jana Lynn Fields Patterson, associate dean of student affairs. The results showed that alcohol is the most popular drug, followed by marijuana, tobacco and cocaine.

Cocaine has been used by 20.5 percent of students at Elon. Within a month of the survey, 7.5 percent of the students surveyed had used cocaine. "Other drugs" had been used by 59 percent and marijuana was

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Elon junior

currently being used by 34.1 percent of the students.

Resident Director Gina Bruer and Patterson are both certified in substance abuse counseling. Patterson hopes students can be counseled without going through the judicial system. "A good number of students on academic suspension have gone through our judicial system for alcohol," Patterson said.

Students are being trained in peer counseling for substance abuse, including a planned program called "reefer madness," which deals with marijuana.

In most cases, freshman are the leading group of substance abusers, followed by sophomores, juniors and seniors. Marijuana use declines after the freshman year, rises again during the junior year. Patterson said the increase during the junior year might be due to the large number of juniors who move off campus.

Marijuana is readily available to Elon students. "Kevin," a

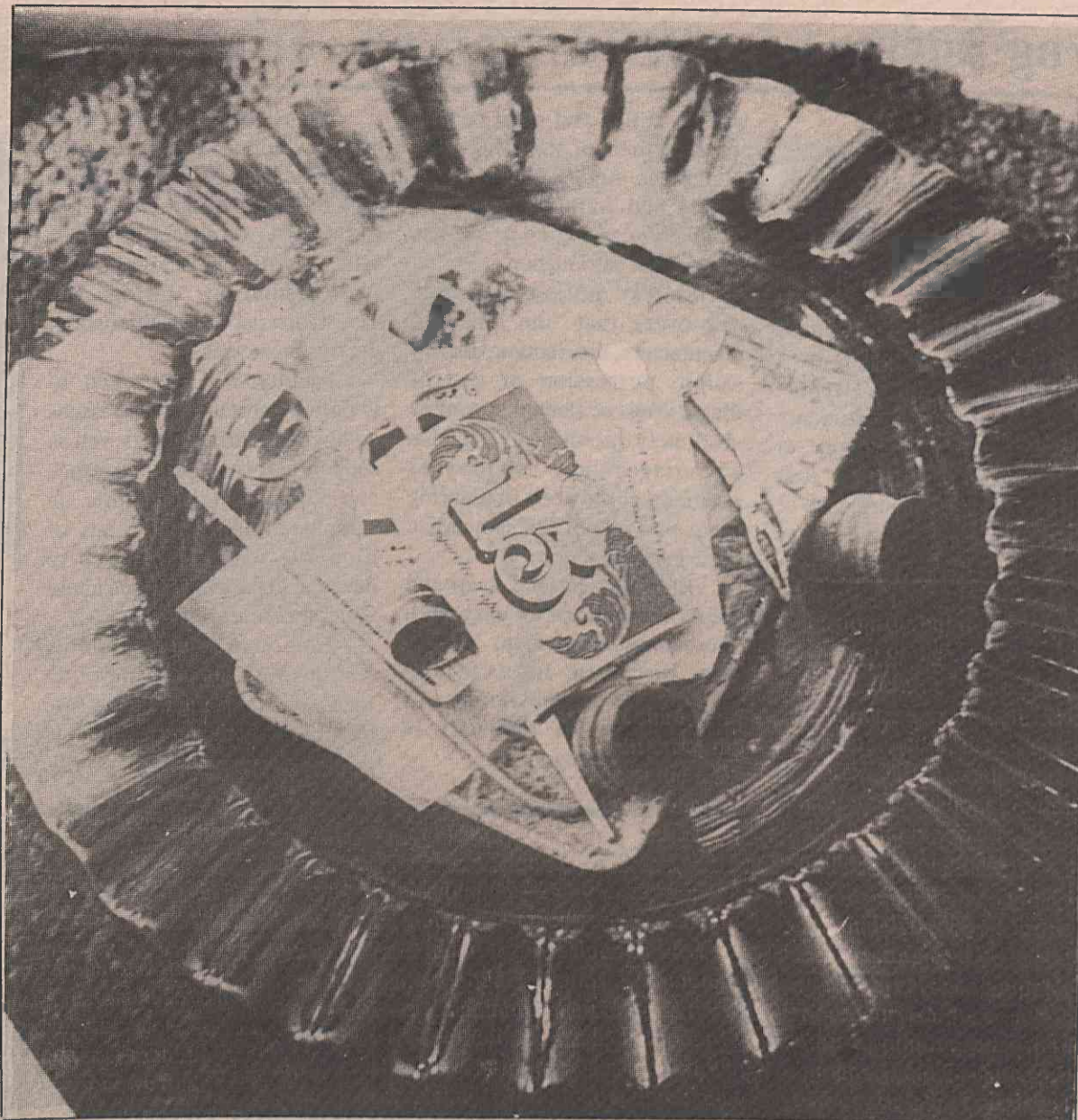


Photo by William Hassell

junior, buys marijuana from a friend in Burlington. "I pay \$35 or \$45 for a quarter ounce, which is usually what we buy," Kevin said. "I can get it anytime I want. I could find some within an hour."

"I always get it from friends and usually for free. Most people who smoke it are more than

hit. Sometimes I get it from my hometown where a few of my friends and acquaintances grow and sell marijuana," Jane said.

"Claire," a freshman, smokes marijuana occasionally when she is not on campus. "It's different from everyday life. You get away from everything for awhile," she said.

Most students said they smoke marijuana to get high. The reason given second most often was to feel good, followed by relaxation, celebrating and to be sociable.

"It's really social," Kevin said. "It's used before you go into a situation."

Mushrooms are slowly gaining popularity

By Scott Kinkade
JC 225

Mushrooms. They grow everywhere -- in damp and moist spots in graveyards and under cow manure. They are more easily accessible than marijuana and cocaine because there are no dealers.

Mushrooms are slowly gaining popularity on campus, according to Jana Lynn Fields Patterson, associate dean of student affairs. "In our recent drug research survey, which was done last Fall 1988 -- our response to how many people

have experimented with hallucinogens -- 14% of the 330 that were surveyed said they had experimented with hallucinogenic drugs, including mushrooms and LSD in that category."

Mushrooms are more expensive than the cheapest form of LSD, costing \$40 for a quarter ounce, said Billy, a student who experiments with the drug. "It takes \$10 to get a high from mushrooms and is considered safer, since LSD is of chemical origin and mushrooms are of natural origin."

When intoxicated by a mushroom, a person feels in a

state of well-being. Other effects are that lights are brighter and the user becomes more aware of surroundings. He sees trails of hands and wavy slow patterns of motion. He laughs a lot and his mind undergoes changes of reality.

The user starts to see different points of view about life; sometimes this becomes very scary. "What you have to do is accept responsibility of yourself and to remember that you have taken a drug and that the effects will wear off in its time and you will be the same

person you were before your trip," Billy said.

"That is true," Patterson said. "A user of mushrooms feels no side-effects, such as a hangover from alcohol. Mushrooms are non-addictive, but you can suffer from stomach cramps and eventual unconsciousness, followed by death, if you are poisoned by eating the wrong type of mushroom."

They look like regular mushrooms, with a cap on top. But how does a mushroom taste?

"Well to be honest, it tastes like cow manure smells," Billy said. "What you have to do is

roll up the cap, which is the most psychoactive part of the mushroom, and swallow it whole, following a Coke or a beer -- as long as you don't encounter the horrible taste, which is the downfall of the mushroom."

Mushrooms leave the same length of intoxication, about eight hours, as LSD.

Because of the hallucinogenic effects of mushrooms, Billy would like to tell a main viewpoint of a user: "You did it to yourself, so accept full responsibility of what happens to you."