

Carrying drugs abroad called risky

By HELLE NIELSEN
Staff Writer

As international efforts to fight drugs intensify, Americans traveling overseas should avoid carrying or buying even small amounts of illegal drugs, officials at the U.S. Department of State warn.

More than 900 Americans were arrested in 1988 for drug possession and trafficking, said Philip Covington, a State Department public affairs adviser. The State Department keeps no statistics on the number of Americans currently imprisoned abroad for drug-related crimes, Covington said.

"If our statistics reveal anything, it is that any association with drugs

or any appearance of association with drugs is very unwise," he said.

A high proportion of those arrested abroad on drug charges were carrying small amounts of marijuana or hash for personal use, he said.

Many Americans erroneously think holding an American passport makes them immune to prosecution in a foreign country, Covington said.

"There is nothing we can do to just spring someone out of jail just because he's an American," Covington said. "We cannot demand the release of an American any more than a foreign diplomat can do that here in the United States."

Most countries prohibit possession

of any amount of drugs, but penalties vary widely. In five countries, severe drug crimes may be punished with the death penalty, he said.

But simply being arrested abroad can be a serious problem, especially in countries with overloaded court systems, Covington said. Some Americans have waited more than a year for a first hearing in court, he said. "Even if someone is not guilty, he may spend a lot of time in jail waiting to prove that."

Americans were arrested for drug possession and trafficking in 64 different countries last year, and one-fourth of those arrests were in Mexico.

Since President Carlos Salinas de

Cortari took office on Dec. 21, Mexico has tightened its drug laws, said Gustavo Gonzalez Baez, the minister for narcotics affairs at the Mexican Embassy in Washington.

The penalty for simple possession is imprisonment for two months to two years, Baez said. Simple possession is defined as an amount no larger than a three-day personal supply. Anybody caught carrying illegal drugs into Mexico could be imprisoned from 10 to 25 years.

Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and West Germany were other countries where Americans were frequently arrested for drug possession.

City Police Roundup

In Chapel Hill:

■ Two incidents of indecent exposure were reported to police Tuesday.

A man exposed himself to an employee of Central Carolina Bank at University Mall and then drove away. Police found a burgundy Oldsmobile Cutlass fitting the description given by the employee, but she could not identify the suspect.

A man followed a woman into a wooded area yelling obscenities. When the woman turned around, the man had pulled his pants down. Police searched the area but found no one.

■ Two women and a man were arrested Tuesday for fighting at the Hargraves Center on North Roberson Street.

■ Two women were the victims of purse snatchers as they dropped their children off at day-care centers Tuesday morning.

In both incidents, one at the Little Tar Heel Pre-School and the

other at La Petite Day Care, women left purses in unlocked cars as they took their children inside. When they returned several minutes later, the purses were gone.

In Carrboro:

■ Two UNC students were arrested Monday and charged with four counts of possession of stolen property.

David Allen Colvin and David Wesley Barger were charged with taking real estate signs from Howard, Perry and Walston Realty and Jordan Properties. They also removed an Alamance County road sign.

The total value of the items stolen was about \$180.

■ A stack of mail was found lying behind the dumpster at Suds and Duds in Plantation Plaza. Most of the mail belonged to residents of the Cobblestone area. The U.S. Postal Service was notified of the situation.

— compiled by Larry Stone

Traffic, parking top survey complaint list

By MARIA BATISTA
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill residents like the college-town atmosphere, diversity and variety of the downtown area, but they dislike the parking and traffic situations, a survey recently showed.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro Downtown Commission's "Help Shape Our Downtown" survey was used to determine the likes and dislikes of the community.

The findings will help to develop a marketing package for prospective downtown businesses and to guide future development projects.

There were 482 respondents to the survey. Students who responded, 85 percent of whom live off campus, made up 27 percent of the total.

The survey asked people which stores they patronize, where they park when shopping downtown, how much they spend at different downtown businesses and what they like and dislike about the downtown area.

The complaint most often cited in the survey was the lack of downtown parking. The proposed Rosemary Square would alleviate much of the strain on current lots, said Danny Fox, president of the Downtown Chapel Hill Association.

The future of the parking situation depends on whether the proposal is adopted, Fox said.

"If it (Rosemary Square) is not built, of course the town will have to find other alternatives," he said.

People are afraid the quaint, village atmosphere of Chapel Hill would be jeopardized by such a large building, Fox said.

There are alternative measures being considered, but they are only in the planning stages, Fox said.

Town appearance was another

issue brought out by 13 percent in the survey. A lack of funding previously hindered the downtown clean-up effort, but the town is working on a large-scale beautification and landscaping project, he said.

"I think we need very little to clean downtown up; I don't think it's major cleaning," he said.

The presence of loiterers, including juveniles, the homeless and vagrants, worried respondents. The intersection of Franklin and Henderson Streets was especially a problem, they

said. The hours of operation and the prices of downtown businesses was also a concern.

Respondents' retail needs include a department store, a variety store, a moderately priced men's and women's apparel store, a shoe store and a sporting goods store.

The commission plans to work with both Chapel Hill and Carrboro to implement suggestions made by the respondents concerning more benches, additional landscaping,

more trash receptacles and the length of the crosswalk signals.

The results were not surprising to many merchants and personnel involved in downtown planning, he said.

"I was not surprised in the least. I think the results supported what the merchants have been saying all along," Fox said.

"I see a lot of the problems being solved," he said. "I think identifying the problems is the first step in solving them."

Altered plan may require new hearing

By ELIZABETH SHERROD
Staff Writer

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen postponed a decision Tuesday on whether to hold a public hearing on requested construction changes for the Amberly subdivision.

The board may require Adaron, developer of the subdivision, to seek a new conditional use permit for modifications made in the plans for construction of a wastewater treatment plant which were not covered in the original permit issued.

After the Division of Environmental Management (DEM) issues a ruling on Adaron's request for a state permit for a wastewater treatment plant, the board will reconsider whether a public hearing should be held. The DEM will rule on the permit by May 19.

"It seems to me it's premature to set a public hearing when we don't know what changes will be proposed," Alderman Tom Gurganus said.

Alderman Randy Marshall said he does not want to endure a lengthy public hearing on the entire project again.

"We need a hearing, whether this is a minor or major modification," Alderman Jay Bryan said. "The project has been changed as a result of the package treatment plant; however, I agree with Marshall not to rehash the whole thing."

Zoning Administrator Helen Waldrop reviewed the modification plans and said the changes being proposed constitute a minor modification to the conditional use permit issued July 28, 1987.

Waldrop said she based her decision on previous modification requests, specifically those that included open space alterations and re-phasings.

"I don't see how you can possibly call it minor," Alderman Frances Shetley said. "All of this is very confusing, but it still amounts to a significant deviation from the 1987 plans."

The Board of Aldermen could seek approval from the Board of Adjustment and rule that the changes constitute a major modification. If this event should occur, Adaron would be forced to seek a new permit.

"I think that all changes made since the approval of the project should be considered," Shetley said.



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