

Drug Use In School - "Difficult to handle"

By KEITH KLEIN

A few years ago, the Bergen County Narcotics Bureau sent an undercover agent to the school at the request of the superintendent and principal. The main objective of this agent in disguise was to set up drug dealers and apprehend them. No dealers were arrested, but a detailed report of drug usage was submitted to the superintendent. Despite the failure to make any arrests, school officials have indicated that it might be done again.

From all indications, this effort will also fail. Administrators, teachers, students, and law enforcement people agree that there is little they can do to prevent the use of drugs here. When the early attempts to set up dealers took place in the mid '70's, several teachers felt that drugs were not a completely uncontrollable problem. But today, according to Senior Peter Barry, cocaine, speed, mescaline, and opium should be words that sound familiar. Not only are the drugs accessible, Peter concedes, but an "overwhel-

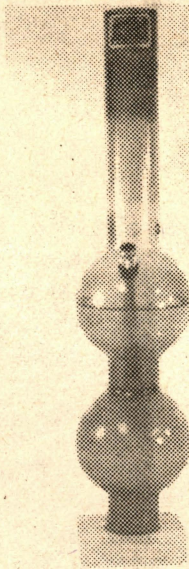
ming number" of students indulge in such habits as "smoking reefer," "doing hits of Mesc," and "snorting coke."

Drug dealing does happen in school and everyone, teachers, administrators, and students agree that stopping or even limiting the flow is almost impossible. There is little to do to prevent it.

The administration seems to be very much aware of the extent of drug usage, and even claim to know many users and dealers within the school. Principal John Mintzer is confident that he knows suppliers and even their techniques; "like the one who wears a certain jacket on the day he is dealing," he explains.

Nothing though, can be gained from this knowledge. The law states that, without concrete evidence, students can get away with anything. Nothing except the normal suspension happens to a student caught with, say, one joint. "There's no point in signing a complaint about someone for smoking one joint" revealed Mr. Mintzer.

Many teachers find it difficult



to determine whether a student is under the influence of a drug in the classroom. Said English teacher Bruce Emra, "Sometimes it's hard to tell if a student is high or if he is just daydreaming." Peter Barry knows of students who go to class stoned "every day". He feels many teachers simply

don't care. One Senior drug user feels that "It's not always the people who are stoned who do bad in class. If they're doing okay and are wasted every day--what the hell!" One

tenured teacher supposedly takes it as a joke when his students report to class high. Another former faculty member turned several of his/her students on to pot. "For some reason," Mr. Mintzer feels, "some teachers are afraid to take action, and won't report a student. Teachers were trained to teach--sometimes that's unfortunate (that they weren't trained in other areas)."

Last year, it was estimated by Mr. Mintzer that ten or twelve students were caught smoking pot. The selling of drugs on school property and during school hours is obvious to the principal. Peter Barry views this as an "every day thing".

Another Senior alleged that dealing goes on in the lobby, lounge, locker room, and class-

room. According to senior Mark Apsey, there is nothing anyone can do to prevent students from using drugs on school time or grounds. "They can sit in the lounge all day," he said. "They can kick everyone out of the parking lots--there's nothing they can do. They can put f---ing machine gunners out there--it won't help."

Whether there is a "drug problem" in school or not is debatable. There is also a question about who is responsible for controlling it. School authorities question whether it is even their responsibility to worry about. Administrators claim to do the best they can, but fear parental reactions. Mr. Mintzer honestly believes "the kids here are great," and finds Highlands' dilemma "microscopic compared to many schools," he has visited.

The whole situation is difficult to handle," concluded Mr. Mintzer. Mark Apsey added, "When there's a will--there's a way."

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Rumors Cleared About Graduation, Hall Passes

Seniors' Early Leave Likely

By PAT ROSSI

Presently, the issue regarding the release of high school seniors in early June is up for debate in the New Jersey legislature. This practice contradicts state law in the strictest sense, which mandates a 180 day school year for all students, but has more or less become an acceptable tradition over the years. The issue was brought to the attention of state education officials as a result of a letter to the editor printed in The Record last summer.

The letter, written by a high school principal in this county, chastised schools in the area for abusing this tradition by graduating their seniors exceptionally early, in some cases, the first week of June. He wrote that the comparatively early graduation ceremonies of some neighboring schools were

disconcerting to his seniors who graduated in the middle of the month.

The principal's letter eventually reached Trenton where Mr. Fred Burke, Education Commissioner, recommended that a mandatory number of days for seniors be arrived at and made into specifically the state law. As a result of his proposal, the issue is now being debated in legislature.

Because it will be some time before this law can be defined and passed, a temporary provision has been made regarding seniors graduating in 1981. It will now be mandatory for every high school principal in New Jersey to write to his county superintendent stating the date of the schools graduation ceremonies and any reason for releasing seniors prematurely. This request must then be approved by the county

superintendent before the commencement date can be made final.

Principal John Mintzer feels that the county superintendent will approve his requested graduation date for the third week in June.

The exact date of this year's commencement exercises has not been set yet by Mr. Mintzer because if any additional snow days occur, the school year will be prolonged for all students in all cases. Excluding this possibility, the last day for underclassmen will be the 23rd. Last day for seniors will be around the 4th, followed by exams and graduation rehearsals.

School officials feel that the seniors have earned the privilege of early release.

However, it is expected that

by 1982, a state law with regard to release of seniors will have been determined. Mr. Mintzer feels that the legislature will not totally abolish the tradition, but will determine

that seniors will be released a set number of days early, statewide, and retain the privilege of not having to attend the full 180 day year.

Hall Passes Back

By KRIS ECKHARDT

With the recent increase of vandalism, graffiti, destruction of ceilings and thermostats, and arson, the faculty and administration have decided to reinstitute a system of hall passes.

At a meeting of teachers and administrators this month, many expressed a need to tighten discipline in order to combat this problem. One solution, definitely in the works, is a return to the pass system once used years ago. This process would involve wooden lavatory passes, or pre-printed

paper forms, signed by the teacher, giving students the

authorization to walk in the halls.

"We want these passes treated seriously," stated Vice Principal Mr. Vinci. "We realize that only a small percentage of students are responsible for the vandalism...hopefully a pass system will curb these incidents."

"Any student caught misusing safety equipment--such as fire extinguishers or alarms--will be turned over to the police and prosecuted as fully as possible. Because the offender is jeopardizing the lives of others, we will show no leniency."

The new pass system is scheduled to go into effect this week.

Registering For Draft

By LINDA MALIAS

This year, there will be a new requirement for Senior boys at school - the reinstatement of draft registration. The Selective Service in Washington, DC, has laid down the law. The 1981 registration is set for all men born in 1962 and 1963 for the non-existent draft in the United States. Men born in 1962 were required to register the week of January 5, 1981, while men born in 1963 and later should sign up within 30 days of their 18 birthday. This concept is a continuation of the program which began last summer concerning men born in 1960 and '61.

President Reagan said during his campaigning that he opposed the draft registration during a time of peace. When Reagan won the election, the Selective Service was doubtful if it should continue the January sign-up. Since there was no formal response from Reagan officials, the program is proceeding and is being funded and approved by

Congress. In fact, President Reagan was asked by over 80 Members of Congress to continue the draft registration.

The purpose of the registration is to obtain a large pool of names and addresses from which men can be chosen by the Selective Service. In case of an emergency, 100,000 men will be unformed. The agency can now save about four weeks worth of time in an emergency situation because of optimistic response to earlier sign-up. This, plus the low cost of \$2 per registrant provides a significant advantage for the program.

The All-Volunteer Force believes that the country should maintain a stand-by Selective Service with a continuous registration system. In 1972, the draft ended, but the registration lasted until 1975. During the following years, the Selective Service declined in efficiency to what they called an "intolerable point." Therefore, a restoration began in November

of 1979, which was designed to return the Selective Service System to the proper readiness as an emergency back-up to our peace time volunteer armed forces. Other actions underway are the development of greatly improved computer support and a training program for potential draft board members.

All male citizens and aliens residing in the US, who were born in 1960, '61, or '62 must register except for those on student or similar visas,

or members of trade or diplomatic missions.

One question on the registration deals with the Supreme Court which has agreed to consider a suit challenging the registration due to sexual discrimination. The US District Court in Philadelphia feels women serve as useful people in the military and could enhance the military flexibil-

ity. While still in office, Jimmy Carter asked originally for women to register also, but Congress rejected this idea.

In another court situation, there is a battle in which a judge has prohibited the Selective Service from requiring registrants to provide their Social Security Numbers. This decision is being appealed.

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