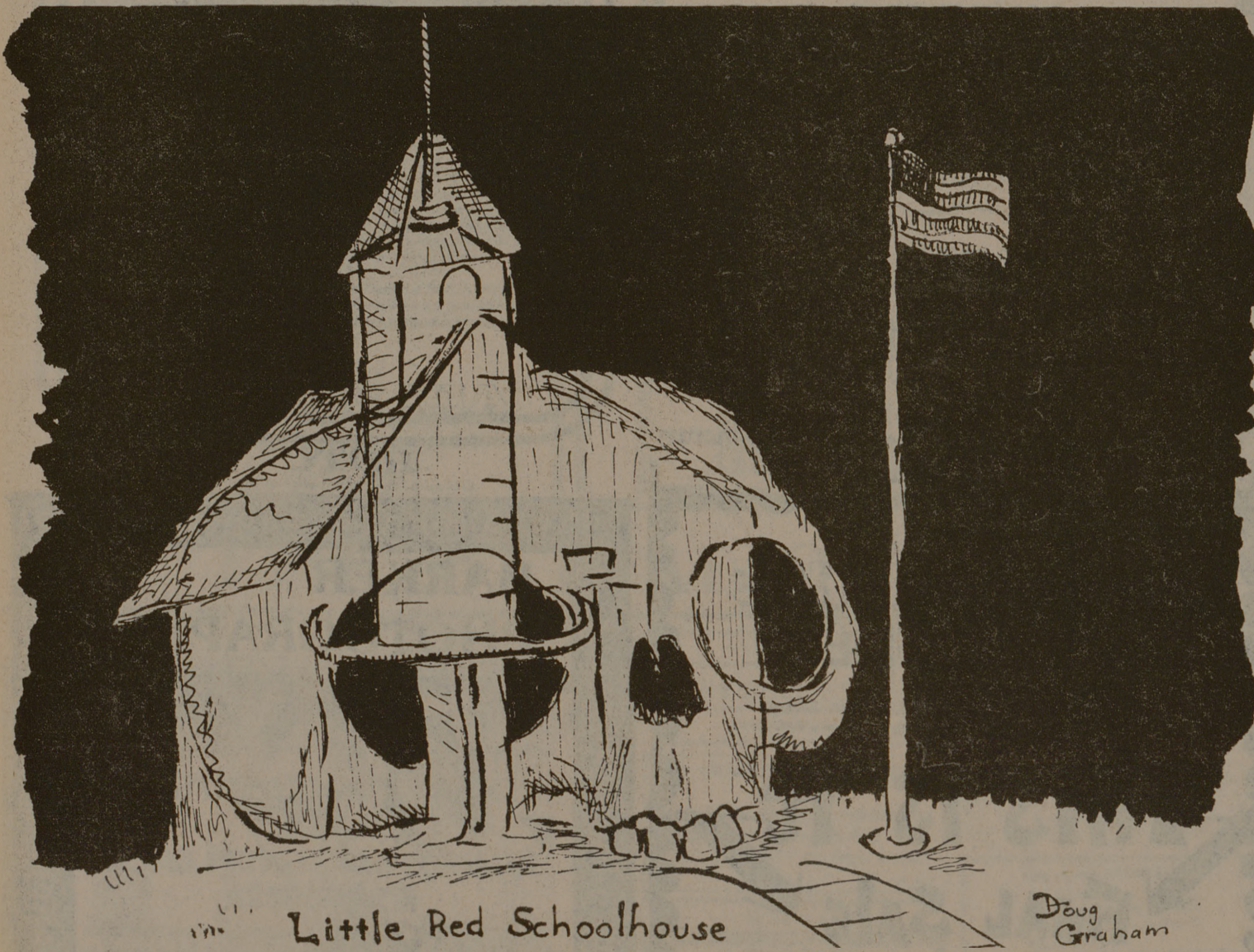


focus

Legal and illegal 'highs' abound

Area shops sell 'legal highs'



Police lenient on juveniles

By JANICE STRIPLING

Although there is a drug abuse problem among juveniles in the Bryan-College Station area, local police officials are being lenient in reporting them.

There is a problem with drug abuse among kids under 17 in the Bryan-College Station area, said Gene Roehen, juvenile probation officer for the College Station Police Department.

But both Bryan and College Station police records are unclear about how big the problem is.

Bryan juvenile records indicate there were eight arrests for possession of marijuana for minors between the ages of 11 and 17. Seven of the eight offenders were males.

But Bryan records concerning drug charges among juveniles are not accurate, said Ted Tumlinson, probation officer for the Bryan Police Department.

"It's not that we haven't kept good records, it's just that we don't report every case we see," Tumlinson said.

Tumlinson does not make a report out on every juvenile.

"I want the child to think about what he has done, not necessarily get a record," he said.

He gave several reasons for not reporting all the cases.

The officer may let the juvenile go because it is too hard to make a case, Tumlinson said.

"We try to get charges against the juvenile which are not drug-related," Tumlinson said. "Also, a police record may harm the child psychologically."

Many times the police will change a drug charge from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Even though a child gets a record, it is not available to the public.

Juvenile files are also kept separate from adult files. A person can have his juvenile record sealed after becoming 17. When the juvenile record is sealed no one can open it without court approval.

Another potential reason for letting juveniles off is if the probation officer wants to use them as informers, Tumlinson said.

The College Station Police Department has apprehended seven juveniles between the ages of 13 and 16 possession of marijuana. Five of those were males.

As in Bryan, College Station police do not report every case.

"Many of the juveniles that we catch are not reported," Roehen said.

Roehen had a case where three girls stole a car and heroin was found in the car. Police did not have

proof that the heroin belonged to the girls. However, a theft charge against the three girls was filed.

Roehen said that the person owning the car was not charged because it could not be proven that the heroin belonged to the owner.

Tumlinson said he uses his discretion in dealing with juveniles, and Roehen agreed.

"I try to give them a break," Roehen said. "The only bad thing about being lenient with juveniles is that the kids form bad attitudes," he said. "They say, 'You can't do anything to me because I'm a juvenile.'"

The young kids know laws are easier on them because they are juveniles, Roehen said. "I think we were too lenient on the ones who were the punishment, such as repeat violators," he said.

Roehen added that just sending repeat violators home is not good enough.

"We apprehended most of the children with marijuana through traffic stops and the schools," Roehen said. "The schools in College Station usually don't like to hassle with getting the police involved."

A school official can legally search a child for contraband as long as the police have not been called, Roehen said. When police have been

notified, the school has to obtain a search warrant to search the child, he added.

"Schools don't want to go through the police agency for that reason," Roehen said.

"I'm sure we have kids that deliver for the dealer in the schools but we have not come across them," Roehen said.

A juvenile delivering drugs in high school is not as conspicuous as an adult, Roehen said.

"A grown man would stick out like a sore thumb among students," Roehen said.

"But how kids deliver we don't know."

"We use those juveniles caught with large amounts for informers, preferably in the junior high schools," Roehen said.

"By using kids in junior high schools, we obtain only small amounts of drugs," Roehen said. He added that a "small amount" is less than an ounce.

"We usually don't get good information from high school informers," said Roehen. He said because of peer-group pressure and the fear of being called a "narc", high school students are usually afraid to inform the police.

"Marijuana is like alcohol, the kids aren't getting anything out of

By TERESA HUDDLESTON

If you want to get "high" but don't want to break the law, several legal alternatives are available. Paraphernalia shops in the Bryan-College Station area now sell different drugs that can be used without legal penalties.

One that is selling big is woodrose seeds. They are hard brown seeds about the size of a pea from native trees in Hawaii.

A pack of 20 seeds sells for around \$3.25. They contain an ingredient similar in chemical structure to LSD.

It takes 6 to 10 mashed seeds to yield one high. Because of their bitter taste, they are usually taken with a soft drink. The effects are the same as LSD or psilocybin mushrooms. The hallucinogenic effect can last up to eight hours.

The packs of woodrose seeds do not have instructions on how to use them as drugs. However, they have instructions on how to grow them. One local record shop manager said

that the store sells an average of six packs a week.

Another local store sells several products that are derived from wild lettuce. They are Opium, Hashish, and Hash Oil. Not the same as illegal opium and hashish.

"These leafy extractions will make everyone's mind a tossed brain salad," the advertisement for the three products says.

Three grams of Opium costs \$6. It is usually smoked in a pipe or "bong." The effect is supposed to be the same as real opium.

Three grams of Hashish sells for around \$5. It is smoked the same as Opium and is supposed to have the same effects as real hashish.

The Hash oil sells for about \$5 for a four-gram bottle. When it is poured on a marijuana cigarette the oil is supposed to give a greater high.

All three products have warnings telling the user not to use heavy machinery after using them.

and to discontinue use if dizziness occurs.

Another legal high is "Lock room." It has about the same effect as amil nitrate, which speeds up the heart and gives about a two-minute rush each time it is inhaled. Amil nitrate is illegal though.

"The bottles are mixed up in someone's basement in College Station," said a merchant who stocks drugs. "The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) hasn't made it legal because the bottles are supposed to be a room deodorizer. You open the bottle and the aroma of menthol is supposed to fill the air."

A warning on the bottle says in case of inhalation a warm and dizziness may occur.

"My doctor said that he would rather see me sniffing airplane than inhaling Lockerroom," the store manager said. "It's nothing cheap thrills."

Lockerroom destroys brain cells and is bad for the heart, he said.

A few local shops stock "legal highs." Argyreia nervosa, better known as Hawaiian wood rose seeds, sell for \$3.25 for a package of approximately 20 seeds. One store owner said, "They are the best-selling legal high on the market."

Other paraphernalia includes books on the art of drug use. One book is a guide to psilocybin, a drug present in certain mushrooms. The mushrooms are prevalent in this area and produce hallucinogenic effects similar to LSD when taken as a tea.

Battalion photos by Susan Webb



it," Roehen said.

"Drug use among older kids is decreasing," said David Walenta, juvenile probation officer for Brazos County.

"The high school trend is alcohol while most of the drug use is in the earlier grades (elementary and junior high schools)," Walenta said.

"It makes sense because alcohol is easier to obtain," Walenta said. "It is much easier for a 16-year-old to dress himself up to look 18 than it is for a younger child," Walenta said.

The police department investi-

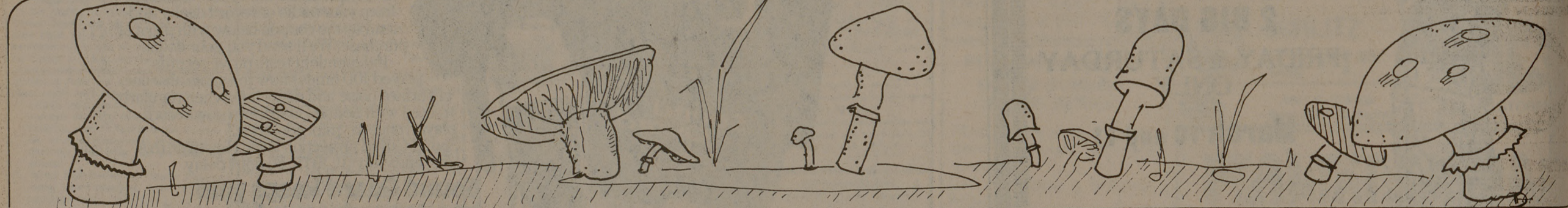
gates while we make the decisions," Walenta said.

When making out a report the police officer also makes out a referral to the probation officer. The probation officer then takes over.

"We had 22 drug-related cases involving juveniles in 1977," Walenta said.

Four were girls arrested for possession of marijuana and one girl for overdose.

There were 13 males arrested for possession of marijuana, two males arrested for possession of harder



'Magic mushrooms' provide hallucinogenic trip

By CAROL BARNEBEY

The so-called "magic mushrooms" that grow in this area have acquired their reputation because they contain psilocybin, an organic hallucinogen similar to LSD.

The "magic mushroom" produces hallucination and illusion. It causes changes in emotion, awareness, and perception of time and space. There is often a feeling of isolation, confusion and paranoia. These feelings may be minimal or overpowering, depending on the dosage.

"Mushroom tea can produce a temporary psychosis," said Toni Nowlin of the Brazos County Crossroads Outreach Center in Bryan. "The reactions would depend on how much and how strong."

Psilocybin is similar to LSD in its effects and structure, however much less potent than LSD. It does not cause physical dependence, but there is a possibility of psychological dependence. The organic damage and long-term effects have not yet been determined.

Psilocybe cubensis is a brown mushroom with purple-brown spores on the underside, said Dr. Willard Taber, a Texas A&M University biology professor. The spores are released by the thousands and are carried by the wind. According to Taber, the spores will fruit if the ground is warm, damp, and contains a large amount of nutrients. This is why the mushrooms usually grow on cow manure, although there are probably spores scattered throughout the fields.

When the mushroom is picked, it turns blue. This action is believed to be the oxidation of the chemical psilocybin.

"Mushrooms haven't surfaced as a problem in College Station," said detective Bobby Yeager of the College Station Police Department. There has never been an arrest for possession of mushrooms in College Station.

There have been cases of students on campus using mushrooms, but these students were taken to the Health Center.

"We haven't had over three or four brush-ins in the last three years," said Sgt. J. D. Gossett of the University Police. Gossett said most of the students who use mushrooms live off campus and have no interaction with the campus police. But Gossett said he has seen a student who had overdosed on mushrooms.

"This stuff is dangerous — particularly if you don't know which mushrooms to pick," Gossett said. "You can take this stuff and kill yourself."

There is not widespread use of psilocybin in College Station according to the records of the College Station and University police. "We don't mess with them much," Yeager said.

Possession of psilocybin violates federal law. Possession is a misdemeanor offense with a penalty of up to one year in prison or a fine up to \$5,000 or both for first offense possession. Dealing has a penalty of up to five years in prison and a fine up to \$15,000 or both.

Possession of psilocybin violates Texas law. Possession is a third degree felony with confinement in the state prison for a term of not more than ten years nor less than two years. An individual may also be punished with a fine up to \$5,000.

It is also illegal to drive while under the influence of drugs. The penalty is 10 days to two years in prison or a fine from \$100 to \$1,000. In Texas, any person who drives a boat or an aquaplane or uses water skis while under the influence of drugs is breaking the law. It is a misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$500 or by imprisonment of not more than six months or both.

Psilocybin mushrooms are usually ingested in tea. The mushrooms are boiled down to a liquid and strained. Tim (not his real name) said he puts the mushrooms in the strainer basket of an electric percolator with water, then boils them. When there is very little left, he mixes the mushroom extract with a powdered drink mix.

"The last little bit will look like sediments in the lower Nile," Tim said. "Tastes like it, too. But its the most potent part."

"You use your mind an awful lot on mushrooms," Tim said. A person's mind can become fixed on one object.

"You won't sit there in a coma, but you will stare at things," he said.

"Usually the first time you do it, you're confused," Tim said. "The first time, you're anxious. You don't know what's going down."

Paranoia is a strong feeling, Tim said. "You don't look that obvious unless you're 'maxed.' You feel naked — real, real obvious."

There is a type of person who is susceptible to "bad trips". These are people who are chronically depressed, living in a dream world, or who have suffered traumatic experiences. Psilocybin breaks down mental blocks, learned traits, and inhibitions. Therefore, the more poorly adjusted a person is, the more likely it is to have a bad trip.

A bad trip, Tim said, is caused by surroundings.

"It's just like Newton's law of motion: your mind is going to be in equilibrium until acted upon by some outside force."

The power of suggestion is strong, so incidents make a distinct impression. But, Tim said, this is good because a person can easily be talked out of bad feelings, Tim said.

Tim suggested as a precaution to, "Do it with somebody who's done it before — preferably more than once."

After the uncomfortable effects, then comes the "good part," Tim said. After an hour and a half (at the most), a person gets the true effects.

"You have reached a speedy plateau. You won't get a greater intensity of speed rushes. People get really giddy at this time," Tim said.

Tim said mushrooms help his appreciation of things. "Colors are so neat," he said. "Like when you turn your head, you see traces of light, like a sunset. Lots of reflected light, not direct light."

When coming down, there is an intense feeling that "you ought to be doing something," Tim said. The feeling is that you have been gone for hours.

Tim said he preferred mushrooms over other hallucinogens, such as LSD.

"Mushrooms are organic and I know somebody didn't screw up in the process of making it," Tim said.

This is true in Texas, although in other places, only 1 percent of street psilocybin has been found to be pure. The other 99 percent was a mixture of LSD, LSD and PCP (horse tranquilizer), or other substances.

Psilocybin is a relatively "safe" hallucinogen when in pure form. There is no chance of physical dependence, however there is a possibility of psychological dependence developing.

It is difficult to overdose on psilocybin. The effects of psilocybin on the body are temporary, not causing any permanent mental or physical damage. "There is no drug to counteract psilocybin — it just wears off," Nowlin said.