

Free Press Editorial Page

Avoid marijuana...

The Hon. John Munro, Minister of National Health and Welfare, made a few comments about the use of hallucinogenic drugs, particularly marijuana, by young people recently. The response staggered him. The press referred to his "Marijuana Speech" although it dealt mainly with pharmaceutical prices. He was called everything from a "voice of reason" to an "overage hippy."

What did he say? He questioned the efficacy of the traditional way of dealing with the problem. He feels the problem of drug abuse is a social one of great magnitude and complexity and must be treated as such.

Communications media have tended to focus on the sensational aspects of the use of specific drugs such as marijuana, LSD and hobby glue. Much heat is generated but little light is shed. A growing volume of overstatement and contradiction makes it difficult for anyone to reach a reasoned, rational conclusion.

The Minister rightly feels it is not a phenomenon of drugs but of people in a society reacting to pressures of society.

Last month in Ottawa two teenagers died. One had sniffed airplane glue, the other nail polish remover. Naturally people are alarmed—especially those with children. They don't want their children exposed to this dangerous practice.

How widespread is it? No one really knows. In 1967 the number of cases involving marijuana exceeded the total of all the previous years combined. The 1967 figure was more than 100 times the figure of 1961.

Sales of amphetamines and barbiturates continue to escalate. Drugs no longer just appear on college campuses. It's a high school problem, too, and has even reached the public schools.

Laval University in Quebec is doing the most comprehensive study. Their studies indicate 10 per cent of high school and university age students had used hallucinogens at least once. There is every reason to believe the figure in such centres as Vancouver or Ottawa is much higher.

Drug use and abuse is as old as civilization itself. An Egyptian papyrus mentions opium. Various cultures developed rules prescribing the social situations in which drugs could be used, and rules governing their use.

Once use of drugs was limited to a select group. Now, however, rapid communication and affluence makes it more readily available to everyone. There appears to be a growing inclination to turn to the use of chemicals for temporary escape from the strains of living.

We have come to feel there is a "pill for every ill."

We are more concerned at present with the effects of marijuana and glue sniffing since they are the most easily accessible. Most of the problems associated with the occasional moderate use of marijuana arise not from its pharmacological actions, but from the fact that possession of the drug is illegal.

However, the important question is not what proportion of narcotic addicts have used marijuana, but what proportion of marijuana users go on to use narcotics. Studies performed in other countries, or 30 years ago in North America, suggesting few marijuana users progress to the use of narcotics, are useless now.

Professional drug vendors will be doing all in their power to popularize marijuana and the other drugs such as LSD, which without question are very dangerous indeed.

Until the actual facts are known about marijuana and all the questions answered, it would be foolish for anyone to use it.

Notes...

* You can't say drinkers and smokers don't contribute a hefty portion to the maintenance of government. Federal tax revenue in 1967 from the sale of tobacco products was \$461,266,414.93. The drinkers dipped up \$296,574,613 in taxes on their brew. It adds up to about \$35 per man, woman and child in Canada. And still the government estimates that the premature deaths of 15,000 to 18,000 Canadians every year are from smoking-aggravated diseases. This combined with the working time lost because of illness from such diseases, costs the economy an estimated \$500,000,000.



PRIZE-WINNING photographs from the Free Press fall fair competitions include the top-ranking shot, above, taken by Ray Saltz, and one of the Honorable

mentions, below, taken by R. J. Jennings. The kissing couple and the snow-bent trees both drew praise from the contest judge.

Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley



It's deer-hunting time again, and though I've never been known as The Deerslayer, I have been under attack. The worst deer hunter in the whole entire world has come out in print charging that I am the worst deer hunter in the world. I'll go for second worst, but I'll not be slandered like that.

All I can say is that "Skinny Wyonch must have the gout again." As I've pointed out before, this was the greatest one-liner filler ever used in the newspaper business.

A filler is a little item used in newspapers to plug a hole. They can run up to ten lines, but they can't be any shorter than one. When we were desperate for a one-liner to fill a hole on the front page one time, we stuck it in. "Skinny Wyonch has the gout." And he did. He couldn't even sue us. Next time we were frantic for a one-liner, we inserted, "Skinny Wyonch has the gout. Again." And he did.

Now, probably suffering from gout, he has written a scurrilous article in which he beats around every conceivable bush, including the mulberry, (and I wouldn't be surprised if he'd been into the mulberry, which would give him the gout) trying to suggest that I am a worse deer hunter than he.

This is not only like the pot calling the kettle black. It is like one politician claiming that his opponent is a bigger liar than he is.

Skinny now sits in my old editorial chair, once occupied by the second worst deer hunter in the world, now by the worst. In a recent article, gout-inspired obviously, he recalled the time we'd gone hunting together.

As far as it was in his nature, he told the truth about me. He said I had no sense of direction in the bush. Well, any damn fool can get lost in the bush, and thousands do every year. That proves nothing.

He said I didn't know how to chop wood. So what? I didn't hire on as a wood-chopper. He said I fell in the lake every time we climbed into the skiff to cross the bight to the island. Some of those pansies along were afraid to get their feet wet, just because it was November.

And he suggested that I put 3.55 rifle shells in John Desjardin's 32 rifle. That's a lie. It was Teemy Wright's 30.30.

But it is incredible how feeble his memory has become (possibly gout-induced) about the important things. He didn't mention that he never once fired his gun at a moving target. He shot at a tree

"His voice is flat from trying to get a word in edgewise."—Arnold Glasow

"Every event that a man would master must be mounted on the run, and no man ever caught the reins of a thought except as it galloped past him."—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Free Press

back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 18, 1948.

Major H. Newman, recreation director of the town of Georgetown, addressed the bi-monthly business meeting of the Y's Men's Club and appealed strongly to parents to make companions of their school-age children.

"It's a boy" and most everyone seems pleased that all predictions were astray and the Royal birth will provide a King for Great Britain some time in the distant future.

A new commercial classroom will be opened in Acton High School within the next few weeks as the room is ready and the equipment just has to be installed.

Forman Lawrence has been elected president of the badminton club at the Y. Nina Simpson is secretary and Mary Bradley is treasurer.

There was a skiff of snow on the weekend which went as far south as Speyside.

Miss Joan Somerville won the Acton Junior Farmers' public speaking competition and also won the district competition held in Waterdown Monday evening. She will represent Halton in the zone competitions in Hamilton.

A driver's bright if he dims his light. More hours of darkness now mean more danger from blinding headlights.

Knox Presbyterian church held their annual meeting at the home of Mrs. J. Jany. Miss Ruby Clark led the devotional period and Mrs. Buchanan gave a prayer.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 21, 1918.

November 11, or the Monday nearest that date, should forever be observed as Canada's Thanksgiving Day, in memory of this immortal second Monday in November that brought its dawn of peace and glory of the greatest morning that has lit the darkness of the world.

"Since first the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The entertainment under the auspices of Knox Church Ladies' Aid, which was postponed from October 14, will be held on Monday evening, 25th inst. The talent includes Mrs. McKay, soprano, Toronto; Miss May Robertson, contralto, Acton; Miss Erma Pattison, violinist, Toronto; Mrs. Robertson, elocutionist, Acton; Miss Dutton, pianist, Guelph; and L. R. Guild and Master Frank, Rockwood.

David H. Lindsay, son of S. H. Lindsay, Sixth Line, Esqueping, has purchased from R. H. Lashby his chopping mill business here. Mr. Lindsay is a bright young man, has spent two years with R. Noble, Ltd. at

Salt and Pepper

by hartley coles



Every so often you hear someone, disgusted with the weather, ask why we don't give the country back to the Indians. They could whomp up summer in the fall because they had some pull with Manitou.

That's how we got Indian summer.

The old Indian legend says Manitou decreed there should be several days of warm, sunny weather after the first flakes of snow fell. The flakes were a warning of impending winter. Warm weather was to give the Indians a chance to make final preparations for the frigid cold.

Winter months for the Indians were hard. They depended on corn women of the tribe planted, harvested and pounded into meal for their winter food. This was supplemented by smoked fish and game when it was available.

His winter abode, despite scenes of peaceful teepees in the snow, was usually made of bark and poles. Several families lived in the long houses which had fires burning on the floor and bunks built along the walls. Smoke found its way out between draughty cracks. Dim interiors were smoky, too.

The Indian people in this neck of the woods were nomads. When the village filled up with garbage they simply moved to a new location and started fresh. They had no garbage men. The stench and rubbish finally forced them to move.

The menial jobs in an Indian village went to the women. The men hunted, ate, picked their teeth and occasionally went on the war path, painting their bodies, shaving hair in fetlocks and singing songs about how brave they were.

The absence of Indian villages around Acton and the northern part of Halton suggests the first Canadians did not think too highly of this area. Too thickly wooded, perhaps. Ideal for hunting deer, bear and rabbits. Most of them stayed down below the escarpment where the weather is milder, the streams broader, the earth more fertile.

You can still find traces of Indian villages around Ashgrove, Oakville, Milton and Streetsville. Some farms in the Ashgrove district have many signs

Norval, and should understand well the requirements of the farmers in the matter of feed, flour and other commodities. The mill is operated by an electric motor and has given good service.

Mr. James Lackey, of Georgetown, has disposed of his house on Church St., Acton, to Alex McDonald. The sale was made by E. A. Benham, of Georgetown. Christmas is just four weeks away from next Wednesday.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 16, 1893.

Inspector Deacon was in town this week paying his final visit for the year to the schools in Acton and vicinity.

Through the generosity of the Rev. Mr. St. Dumas of the Baptist Church, the pupils and teachers of all departments of Acton public school had the privilege of attending his Oil Region Entertainment on Tuesday afternoon without charge. Models of all oil machinery, tools, wells and specimens of the raw materials and their products were shown and lucidly explained.

The 49th anniversary services will be held in the Methodist church next Sunday and Monday. Rev. Dr. Carman, general superintendent of the Methodist church in Canada, will preach morning and evening. On Monday evening he will deliver his celebrated lecture "Trade and Get Rich"

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, Milton, November 13, 1868.

A brute entered the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, a few days ago, and offered a despatch addressed to a lady, couched in language so profane as to raise the question of the propriety of its reception. Are we supposed to know or recognize the language or despatch? Must we not accept everything offered to us? Are we to be the judges of the morality of messages? Such are the questions which sometimes puzzle receivers in the performance of their duty. In the case referred to, an appeal was made to the chief executive officer, who promptly endorsed upon it as follows, "This message must be refused, no matter what the consequences may be." This was formerly, and we trust now will be the understood rule. No brute should be allowed to use the wires for the conveyance of his vulgarity, and messages of this character, essentially profane or obscene may with safety be refused. In the reception of messages having in view the commission of crime, the law rejects the idea of an obligation on the part of telegraph companies to receive whatever is handed to them.

indicative of Indian encampments. Others have conical mounds which are thought by some to be burial mounds.

The Indians had a novel way of disposing of their dead. They placed the bodies on platforms in the trees and left them there for the elements to pick the bones bare. Every few years they had a big feast for the dead. Families gathered up the bones of dead relatives. They all came together and buried the bones in huge pits. There they were left for the archaeologists to discover and marvel over.

Mourners carried on as if death had just arrived. Perish those thoughts of a big orgy, however. This arrived with the white man—and alcohol. The Indians danced, sang, rent their buckskins and covered themselves with ashes to honor the departed.

Although few traces remain of the country's first inhabitants they left us a legacy in place names like Esqueping, Nasagaways, Chingacousy, Eramosa and Toronto.

Esqueping—land of tall pines in the Mississauga dialect—is aptly named. The township was once densely forested with tall, fragrant pines. There are still some which survived the pioneer axes in the more remote areas of the township.

Nasagaways—dividing of the waters—is a name which the historians still debate. As far as I can make out it refers to the creeks which rise in the township and flow in different directions—some emptying into Lake Ontario, others into Lake Erie.

We have a similar watershed just outside Acton. Fairy Lake, fed by the creek from Beaver Meadow, flows into Black Creek, into the Credit River and then into Lake Ontario. Over the ridge which we call the "Breezes" the headwaters of Blue Springs Creek runs through the "Gore" and joins the Eramosa River below Guelph. The waters flow into the Grand, which empties into Lake Erie.

How'd we get talking about water? We started out discussing Indians and the weather.

Give the country back to the Indians? It's obvious they wouldn't want it.



BELGIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS took these bleak pictures of ruins during World War I. Albums depicting the scenes of desolation in Europe, such as these, are

included in the box of personal effects of one of Acton's soldiers from the Great War.