

Meet On Drugs

Youth Says Adults Have Their Addictions, Why Not Us?

BY MARGARET LADE

More than 200 people, from pre-teens to grandparents, crowded into Wrixton Hall at St. Mary's Anglican Church on January 11 to watch a film, "Speed City", the story of a girl addicted to stimulant-type drug, and to ask questions of Richmond Hill resident Ted Milligan of the narcotics rehabilitation section of the Addiction Research Foundation in Metro.

A replay of a CBC weekend program, "Speed City" described a lonely teenage girl's introduction to "speed", an amphetamine, her increasing dependence on the drug and her indifference to the health hazards involved.

The discussion, however, broadened into considering of many drugs, alcohol, caffeine and tobacco included.

"To talk about one drug without considering the broad aspects of drug abuse is misleading," said Mr. Milligan. "Some drugs pep you up, some slow you down, some 'expand your mind', — you may hear things or see things that are not there — Some are medically useful, all have physical effects, and some have social effects."

However, he said, there is a great lack of subjective information about the long term effects of many of the drugs currently abused by society. "We have to try to get

them into some kind of perspective. Methedrine (speed) pep you up, it also helps you to lose weight."

He cited some startling statistics to indicate that the "good uses" of many drugs are rapidly being outstripped by the "bad uses".

In 1966, said Mr. Milligan, 8,000,000,000 tablets of methedrine were manufactured in the United States — ten times more than were required for normal medical use, and 50 per cent of these found their way into illicit channels. One hundred million were imported to Canada in a year — four for every man, woman and child.

It is illegal to traffic (sell without a doctor's prescription) in amphetamines, but it is not illegal to have them, he told the audience.

Abuse reached such proportions in Sweden and in England that these drugs have been completely outlawed, Mr. Milligan declared. The only people who seem to be convinced they are more beneficial than harmful are the people who manufacture them.

It was obvious from the questions and comments from the audience that the young people were far more knowledgeable about drugs than the adults, and a youth pointed to adult abuse of alcohol.

Mr. Milligan conceded that alcoholism is a major

problem, that there are at least 100,000 alcoholics in Ontario, "It is still the number one problem".

In the adult society, alcohol is "the drug of choice", and with the under 30 group narcotics, marijuana, and other "illegal" drugs were gaining in popularity as "the drugs of choice".

Analysis of samples brought into the research foundation from the street showed that many of the drugs being peddled illicitly are adulterated — that some of the substances in samples of LSD defied analysis, that only 54 per cent were actually what the buyer had paid for.

Several young people from Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora, who had provided music at the church service earlier in the evening were very critical of the approach to drug education in the schools, charging that the real answer lies in religion.

"We are getting drug education in school, and it is a failure. They only tell us what we already know. We need something better — Jesus Christ", declared a long hair youth.

He assured a questioning parent that the drug problem in the schools of York County is not a minor one, "It is a very real problem and we have to show the students there is something better, but it is not good enough just to say 'drugs are not good for you' or 'it is illegal'."

He was supported by Mr. Milligan, who said a survey of all high school students in London, Ontario, revealed that 11 per cent had used marijuana, 2.4 per cent had tried LSD, 20 per cent had sniffed glue, and more than two per cent had tried speed.

"There is an alarming instance of drug abuse across Canada."

Rev. Bruce Fraser of St. Mary's Church told the audience he had taken part in a similar but smaller study in North York and the findings were almost identical to those of the London survey. In Barrie the percentages were even higher.

One adult laid the blame for the increasing popularity of drugs at the feet of a handful of promoters.

"Ever since Madison Avenue found there was a big teenage market we have been exploiting the kids. It is sheer greed. A small group is exploiting not only the kids, but the adults."

Mr. Milligan agreed, "We are up against big business," adding, "The news media have been almost totally irresponsible in exploiting the situation." Sensationalism and scare tactics in the news columns and broadcasts were counteracted by advertising designed to push the sales of the very products the media purported to condemn.

The attitude of the media he described as "hypocritical".

Those who are striving to keep young people from dangerous drugs will not succeed by trying to scare them, he asserted. "They already know more than we do about drugs, it is very recent phenomena and parents do not know where to begin. There is no way of saying at this point what the long-term effects of drug abuse will be."

Educational programs in schools should be started before children reach their teens, Mr. Milligan declared. Glue sniffing is most prevalent among children of elementary school age.

He agreed with a girl who protested that adults live by drugs, stimulants, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, alcohol, cigarettes, coffee. "The availability of the drug determines the drug of choice. A person can get dependent on anything."

Like the girl in the film, those who do come to depend on drugs find that this is the easiest way to combat loneliness. "We cannot all be outstanding, and it is an easy way to obtain an identity in our own eyes."

There could be other factors, such as the body chemistry, that could make a person open to addition if they were exposed to a certain drug, he added. In July a federally-appointed committee was established to study the extent of the problem.

The young people were most vocal in pressing for acceptance of the "true God."

"Inside everyone there is a 'God shaped vacuum', one youth declared. "Too many try to fill it with drugs and alcohol. Why is it so difficult for people to find God?"

"Maybe they are too religious," he suggested. "They are Lady Clairvoy types — 'Only God knows for sure'. They are afraid to talk about what they believe in."

Parents were anxious to know where and how they could learn about drugs, symptoms of drug abuse and what to do about it, and were informed that literature is available through the Addiction Research Foundation.

A student agreed adults are uninformed. "People say parents are apathetic, that they don't care. I think parents don't know. I think meetings like this are great. They let the parents know what is going on."

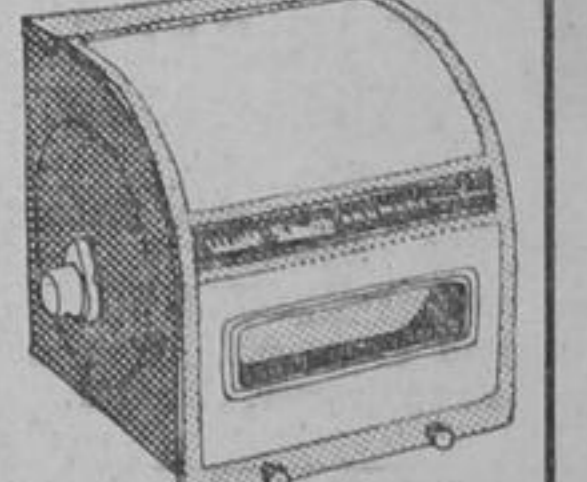
Mr. McGuire asked for suggestions for a follow-up, and the suggestion that received the most enthusiastic response was that a panel of students tell of their own experiences with drugs users and the drug situation.

The audience was invited to write suggestions for follow-up sessions on paper supplied, and informal discussion continued for some time as coffee was served by women of the church.



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Elgin Mills And Jefferson News

Correspondent Leonard Lomas — Phone 884-3000

Winter Fun-O-Rama

By popular demand a second "Winter Fun-O-Rama" has been arranged for this Sunday January 25, from 10 am until dark. The site will be the enchanted winter wonderland north of Richmond Hill, between Yonge and Bayview on 19th Avenue (Gamble Sideroad East) at the home of Dr. D. W. and Mrs. Thompson, where there will be skating, hot drinks, hamburgers, hot dogs and skiing (six free rides).

Admission will be \$2 per family and proceeds will be applied to the community activities of the Jefferson Community and Recreational Club.

Neighborhood Notes

The monthly meeting of the community club will be held January 27 at 8 pm in the school auditorium. Guest speaker will be County Public School Area Superintendent Murray Dobson. His topic will be "How Children Learn." Mr. Dobson is the former assistant superintendent of Richmond Hill Public Schools.

Of interest to residents of the community will be the general meeting of Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce to be held at the Summit View Gardens Restaurant January 27 at 8 pm. (Unfortunately on the same day and hour as the community club meeting across Yonge Street!). Architect Douglas Allen,

chairman of the Civic Improvement Committee, will explain progress to date and involvement of the Department of Highways, town council and hydro commission and various service clubs as he reviews "Project Facelift" with films and displays. This project concerns the reconstruction of Yonge Street.

Birthdays are extended to Roy Petry on the 23rd, Ingrid Jansen and Christopher Fowkes on the 24, Dianne Eldridge on the 26th and Sherrie Davis on the 28th.

The 1st Jefferson Guide Company spent a very enjoyable Saturday afternoon at the Allencourt Bowling Lanes with their Captain Dorothy Wilton, Mrs. Bette Siver and Mrs. Irene Boyle provided transportation.

The Temperanceville 4-H Homemaking Club will be starting up again shortly for a new project, which will be "The Third Meal". Mrs. Wilfrid James and Mrs. Charles Henshaw have consented to be leaders for this course and interested girls of the neighborhood should contact them for information.

Church News

The last service in St. John's Anglican Church, Jefferson, at which the present pews were in use, was held Sunday morning. In preparation for delivery of new pews from the Exter Furniture Company, the old

pews were removed Tuesday evening and a new plywood floor was installed by men of the parish. An anonymous memorial donation has been received towards the cost of the new pews. Those interested in making memorial donations should contact the rector, Rev. Earl Gerber.

The old pews, which were installed prior to World War 1, contain a seat of 2 x 15" pine, just over 9 feet long. There are 20 of these which will be sold to any interested persons. Contact either of the wardens, Peter Hughey at 773-5816 or Len Lomas at 884-3000.

Certainly Pierre Berton never sat on one of them before writing about "The Comfortable Pew".

A new "indoor-outdoor" carpeting will be installed before the new pews are delivered next week.

There will be an 11 am service as usual on Sunday, which will be held either on chairs in the church or in the lower hall, depending on the state of the

floor. The service will be morning prayer.

The Winchester Group of the ACW met January 21 and viewed a film on the work of the Canadian Bible Society.

The men's Bible study group will meet tonight (Wednesday) at 8:30 pm to watch the TV production of "Reddick II" and to discuss it over a cup of coffee.

The married couples group meeting, originally scheduled for January 23 has been postponed and a new date will be set next week.

The annual vestry meeting of the St. John's Church will be held in the upper room January 26 at 8 pm. Every person 18 year of age and over, who is confirmed and has been worshipping with this congregation for the past three months is regarded as a member of vestry and entitled to vote. New officers for the ensuing year will be elected and the annual reports and budget considered.

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Your Legion Reports
Branch 375, Royal Canadian Legion
By Bill Hughes

Last Saturday night, saw a very successful social event in spite of inclement weather and a late start, we held our annual Robbie Burns Night. A terrific pipe band played from the piping in of the Haggis right on through to the end of the evening. To add to the success was Charlie McQuestion and his band (winner of the Old Time Fiddlers Contest at Shelbourne) who entertained our guests and members in a right royal manner. Everybody at the dance thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Installation of officers of the Ladies' auxiliary, will be on January 23. This will be followed by a special "Free and Easy". All members welcome. The Dinty Moore Night will be held on February 6.

The weekly Saturday afternoon entertainment (Don Celsie) and free food has been a splendid innovation to the program for our members and guests. Thanks, Gord Mills and help.

Mrs. John Ogden, wife of our poppy committee chairman, and indefatigable worker, John, is a patient in York Central Hospital.

Starting January 27 there will be mixed euchre every Tuesday night at 8:30 pm. Everyone

PICKERING: A 10-year-old Pickering Township boy, Jason Barber, is \$5 richer today because he reported seeing a man dumping garbage on one of the township's roads. Accused was Dmytro Melnyk, of Toronto. Mr. Melnyk's case was dismissed when Jason proved to be uncertain about what an oath meant. An old township bylaw provides that the sum of \$5 be paid anyone who does such a service as Jason did.

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