

Drug arrest rate up nine percent over 1974

Drug dealers are burning many of their clients in a phony amphetamine swindle, Lincoln Police Captain Paul Jacobsen said Monday.

"There's a lot of ripoff going on right now with people buying speed," he said.

Jacobsen said dealers are selling tablets containing caffeine, claiming the pills are speed.

"You get some high school kid who doesn't drink much coffee," he explained, "and after he tosses down four of those pills, he's had the equivalent of eight cups of coffee. That's going to affect him, and he'll think that's the speed working."

Jacobsen, in charge of the Lincoln Police Department's drug enforcement efforts, also said felony arrests in drug cases have risen in the past year, and now top misdemeanor arrests.

Arrests up

"That's because more deliveries are being made into this area, and we're getting our share of them," he said.

Jacobsen credited part of the increased arrest rate to the city's patrol officers, saying, "More officers are cognizant of drug-related signs now. They know a drug scene when they come across one."

LPD recently sent 17 patrol officers to a drug orientation course in Omaha, Jacobsen said, "not to make them narcotics officers, but to familiarize them with drug procedures."

Comparison of yearly arrest statistics show a nine per cent rise in drug arrests in the last year, but Jacobsen said one positive indicator in the statistics was a nine per cent decrease among young people in the 16 to 17-year-old range.

Jacobsen said most of the increases in drug arrest rates took place in the 25 and older age span, adding, "You know, we went around with that generation over this once before and we hit them pretty good, but they didn't learn anything!"

Team adequate

Lincoln police recognize drug problem areas in local sales of hashish, marijuana and amphetamines, Jacobsen said, adding that his drug enforcement team of five is adequate to fit the city's drug control needs.

Reacting to reports that local drug dealers indicate they do not fear LPD interference with their operations, Jacobsen said, "That's all right, in Nebraska it is the state undercover officers who have the money to deal in the drug market."

The State Patrol seldom makes an immediate in-view arrest, he said.

"But I think we've sent as many to the penitentiary as they have," he added.

The increase in felony drug arrests has a variety of

underlying causes, Deputy County Attorney Robert Gibson said Monday.

Substantial rise

Each year since 1969 the rate has risen by more than 100 per cent he explained, but in the last year it has tapered off.

"It's still a substantial rise, and this year we will have more felony arrests than last year, but I think we've reached a peak in percentages," Gibson said.

Gibson's office is attempting to set up cases with an emphasis on the major dealers, he explained. Gibson defined a major dealer as one who imports large quantities of drugs for wholesale distribution.

Gibson said amphetamines produced in clandestine California laboratories being brought into Nebraska in great numbers are causing the biggest problems in enforcement. In addition, he said, the recent influx of counterfeit speed, made of chalk, starch, or caffeine, leads to violence in the community between dealers and purchasers.

"After a burn in something like this," Gibson said, "that's when we see the guns out, and it can lead to a pretty dangerous scene."

Drugstore burglaries

Gibson said there have been a number of drugstore burglaries in the Lincoln area by persons looking for drugs.

"The persons who do that are really heavily involved in personal use of amphetamines, barbiturates, morphine or codein, any of the opium derivatives," he said. "They are almost always people with serious drug abuse involvement."

Drugstore burglars generally exhibit a great deal of sophistication about what they take, Gibson said, adding that they usually bypass most of the drugs in the store and head straight for the drugs they specifically want.

Gibson said that most amphetamines being sold in Lincoln today are underground workshop-made. He said his office rarely commissions quantitative analysis on such items when they come into the hands of the police, but he said analysis is made of "the hard narcotics we get, so that we can check on what is hitting the street."

Recent examinations of LSD has shown local mixtures to be free of strychnine, Gibson reported. In the Lincoln area, he added, LSD has become "a high school phenomenon. The university crowd isn't interested in it anymore, but at the high school and junior high level the kids want to see what happens."

Prices soar

Gibson said that drug prices have soared in the few years he has been working drug cases in Lincoln.

"Recently, we heard about a Jamaican marijuana was reportedly selling for \$2000 for ten pounds, Gibson said.

He said marijuana was sold in pounds instead of kilos after the statute was changed declaring that possession of more than a pound of marijuana constituted a felony.

"A lot of people will take a chance on a pound or less," Gibson said, "but in the old days, when the limit was half a pound, people would either try to stay below that or go big for the kilo (2.2 pounds)."

Gibson said he doubted criminal enforcement was the means to effectively control drug use. He suggested education should play an equally important role in stopping drug abuse, adding that the efforts of law enforcement agencies should be concentrated on large scale dealing operations, narcotics and the sale of barbiturates.

Mindset

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services on a confidential level for students with emotional and drug related problems.

Crisis prevention

Outreach provides help in crisis intervention situations and is beginning a greater effort in its crisis prevention programs, according to Outreach director Dr. Carmen Grant.

"If we can reach people who are in stress," explained Grant, "and help them with their problem-solving in a way that has a lasting effect, perhaps we can help them avoid further complications."

Three student volunteers attend the Outreach program services, according to Dr. Grant. Each student has had some experience with drugs or with close friends who took drugs, she said.

"The students who run the center are pretty much on their own," she remarked.

In her work at the center, Grant said she discovers some cases where students still have trouble with drugs, but those are most often students who have problems with many aspects of their lives.

Self-responsibility

Grant said one obvious problem with recent drug mishaps was the result of students not checking out the quality of the drugs before using them.

Most drug users today, she said, are better educated in the procedures and rarely have problems. People who are not really coping are the ones who are using drugs unwisely she said.

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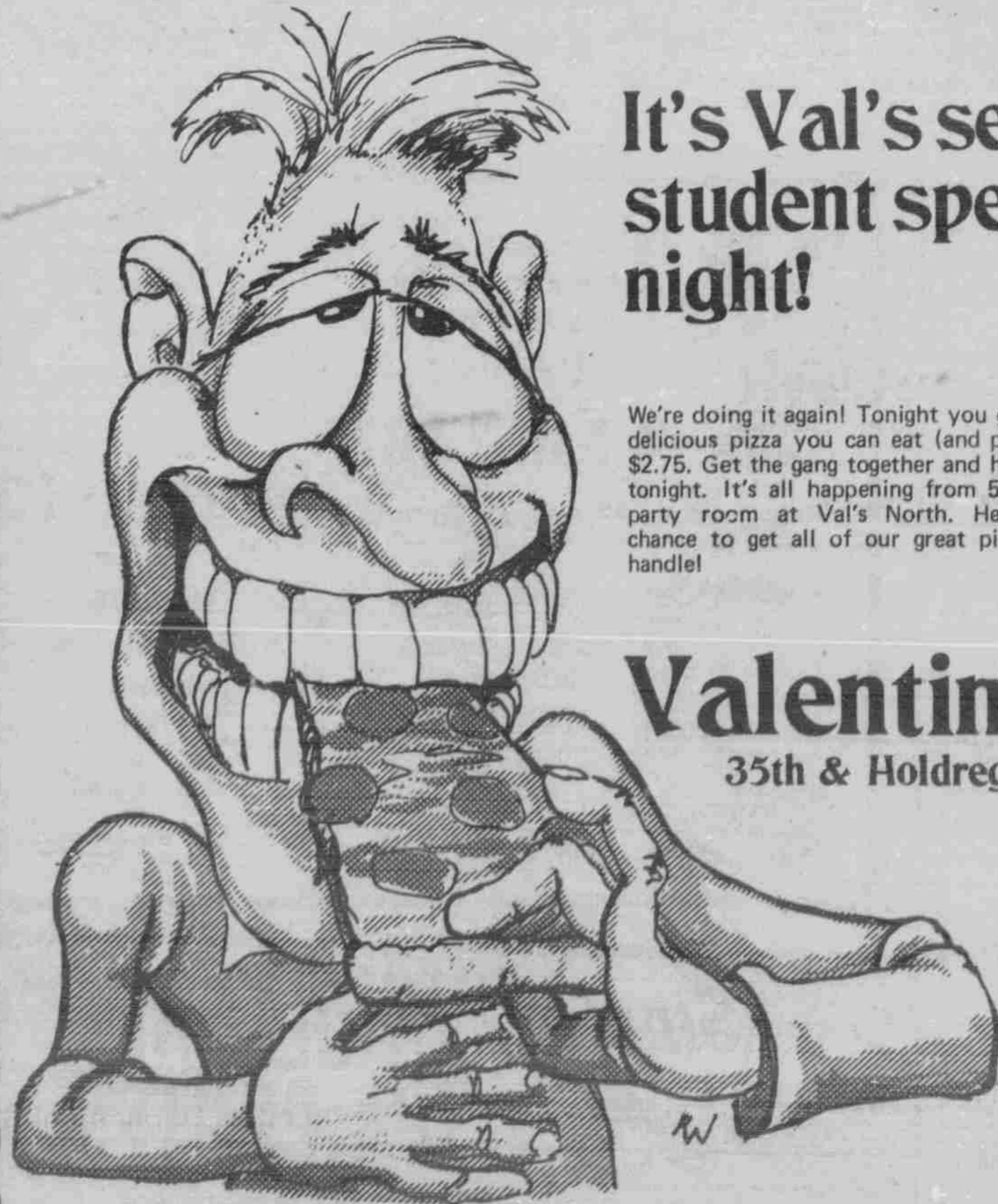


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