



Photo by Ted Kirk

New test can detect THC in tokers

Lincoln Police Chief George Hansen said Wednesday he is not familiar with a new test to detect marijuana intoxication.

The new test, reportedly is not as convenient as the balloon test to detect alcohol, according to February American Chemical Society monthly science summary.

The procedure, suitable for routine legal or medicinal use, detects the active ingredient in marijuana, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), in blood.

"In Lincoln our major problem is people who drive under the influence of alcohol," Hansen said. "So as of yet, the accidents caused by those under the influence of marijuana have not been very great."

As reported in a recent issue of Analytical Chemistry, the biggest drawback of the procedure is that it must be accomplished in the laboratory. It does not, however require expensive equipment or highly skilled people and can be completed in about two hours.

If the test does become necessary in Nebraska, the state laboratory would have to handle the procedure because the Lincoln Police Department does not have laboratory equipment, Hansen said.

The method has been tested successfully on blood samples from volunteer smokers in a study funded by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Key features of the test are its sensitivity and its ability not to be affected by narcotics, tranquilizers, or psychoactive drugs, according to Analytical Chemistry.

A screening test is needed to determine whether the suspect is intoxicated or not and then a test is taken to find the level of intoxication, the report said.

The procedure's discoverer Dr. Joe Vinson of the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, reportedly is now working on a test to be conducted on saliva rather than blood samples.

Credit earned for field project

By Sharon Frohner

UNL's Anthropology Dept. is offering students a chance to gain experience this summer through a field project near the Norden Dam project in Northwest Nebraska, according to anthropology instructor Carl Falk.

Falk, principal investigator for the project, said students will receive nine hours of credit for the eight week session.

The field school will work closely with the Norden project, a \$100,000 federally funded survey covering about 25,000 acres in Cherry, Brown and Keya Paha counties. This area will become the Norden Dam and reservoir, a Bureau of Reclamation project scheduled for

completion in December 1977.

UNL contracted with the bureau to make the cultural survey to satisfy the National Environmental Policy of 1969, a law requiring surveys of areas affected by projects that involve changes to the earth, said Alan Osborn, supervisory archaeologist for the Norden project.

The main objectives of UNL's survey, Falk said, "are the identification and evaluation of all cultural (historical, historic architectural and archaeological) and paleontological values within the project area."

Once these resources are identified, he said, "we'll provide the Bureau of Reclamation with a full evaluation of the probable effect that their proposed action (the dam and reservoir) will have on the values identified."

Falk said they will provide recommendations for preservation or mitigation of the resources. He said they will consider how construction will affect these resources and report to the Bureau.

Court action was brought against the Bureau of Reclamation last November by environmental groups because they thought the required environmental impact statement about the Norden project was ambiguous and inadequate, Osborn said.

In addition to satisfying the terms of the contract, the expedition will help answer research questions relevant to anthropology and archaeology, Falk said.

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