

Officials not in agreement on marijuana trends

By Bob Glissmann

Local and campus officials don't seem to agree on trends in marijuana smoking. A campus police officer says use among UNL students is up, a UNL Health Center spokesperson says it's down and a residence hall director says he can't see any difference.

Marijuana is "more accepted, more prevalent this year," Campus Police Officer Randy Kleager said. Kleager said he based his conclusion on information he has received from students, faculty and the university housing staff.

"A lot of people are accepting it," he said. "There are not as many complaints about it."

"My general impression is that it (marijuana) is used less," said Dr. Robert Heins, a psychiatrist and the director of UNL's Mental Health Center.

"Most students try it and most drop it," he said.

He attributed his findings to "a little increase in the maturity of students" who feel grades are more important.

Jim Travis, residence director of Abel North, said, "I really can't see any differ-

ence" in marijuana use. "The frequency of reports has been consistent."

He said he has seen "a couple of cases a month in the seven months I've been here."

A poll in the Omaha World-Herald reported that marijuana smoking among high school seniors has dropped from 37 percent last year to 34 percent this year. The survey, by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, polled 17,000 seniors.

Don Fiedler, Nebraska director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), cited a poll that shows a decline in usage in states that have decriminalized marijuana. He said when marijuana is treated as a "forbidden fruit," people smoke it to rebel.

Marilyn Keller, director of community awareness at the Lincoln Council on Alcohol and Drugs, said she too has noticed a change.

"We're seeing a cooling of the marijuana issue smoking is no longer a primary concern," she said. "As far as prevalence of marijuana smoking, more and more kids in elementary and junior high schools are smoking, compared to five years ago."

Both Fiedler and Keller said they were pleased with the poll results, but Keller said "tell me what that does for the sixth-graders who have started smoking."

The survey also reported that the use of harder drugs—cocaine, amphetamines—has increased from 35 percent to 39 percent.

Kleager said he has seen an increase in the use of LSD and cocaine.

"Cocaine is now the drug of choice," Kleager said.

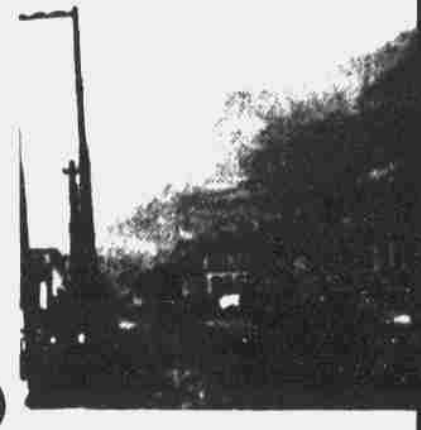
Keller said use of cocaine, amphetamines and alcohol also has increased among young people.

Fiedler said better drug education in the schools and criminal sanctions for irresponsible use and sale could better control drug abuse.

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Budget cuts . . .

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Currently, the guaranteed loans can go to any students regardless of family income, he said.

"In no case can they borrow more than \$2,500 for an undergraduate dependent, \$3,000 for an undergraduate independent and \$5,000 for a graduate student," Aripoli said.

"The student can borrow the difference between the cost of education we establish, minus the cost of financial aid the student is receiving," he said.

The new proposal, if it is approved by Congress and goes through all other legislative channels, will change the borrowing process, according to Aripoli.

The loan amount still will be determined by taking the difference between the cost of education and the cost of financial

aid received by the student. However, Aripoli said the expected contribution from a student's family for the year also will be deducted from the cost of education.

The expected contribution from the student's family would be determined by requiring the student to fill out a need analysis form, according to Aripoli.

"If the student needs the money, he'll still try and borrow, but if he doesn't need it he probably won't," Aripoli said.

He said this differs from the current situation where students who don't need loans for financial reasons may still apply for them.

"We'll be doing everything to make sure our students are protected to the extent that we can," he said.

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Jeep CJ-7	1	1 in 100,000	1 in 1,000,000
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