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PO-BOX
Drugs

No Kicks From Coke Any More

Questions should be sent to the Community Commission on Drug Abuse, P.O. Box Drugs, Livonia, 48151.

Q. I'm a pharmacist and was referred to your column for the answer to a rather puzzling situation that has arisen lately. Kids are coming into my pharmacy requesting Coca-Cola syrup in large quantities. They even try to consume it on the premises which I have put a stop to.

I'm aware that cola beverages contain a mildly stimulating dose of caffeine alkaloids - such as could be gotten from several cups of coffee. But is there some new "kick" that's been discovered in this syrup? Is there anything to justify my refusing to sell it under these unusual circumstances? This sort of business I don't need.
B.B., Livonia

A. Let's answer your last question first. You are under no obligation to sell this product to people who give evidence of using it (whether successfully or not) for kicks. The general rule being that "no good will be done."

You are correct in your evaluation of this syrup being no stronger a stimulant than coffee. We suspect that your clientele is about three-quarters of a century behind the times: Coca-Cola (originally formulated by a pharmacist, by the way) at first did contain cocaine, an extremely potent stimulant. It was also found - and legally - in many tonics of the time. As the dangers of this drug became apparent, it was dropped from the list of ingredients. Cola beverages today are safe for most people.

This is a convenient opportunity to mention the subject of "Coke and aspirin." People we have talked to from age 7 to 70 eventually get around to asking about this combination. There has never been any documented evidence that Coke and aspirin do anything. Why this particular rumor persists to this day is a mystery to everyone concerned.

It might be helpful to mention to those who are trying to "act big" by attempting to abuse cola syrups that the major use of this product is for treating nausea of infants. Rather large amounts are administered (preferably as directed by a physician) for vomiting in infants and children. Pointing out that "cola syrup is for babies" may help to cool some of the "big shooters" who are bothering you for it now.

Q. Here is a conversation I overheard between two really young children: "I'm gonna grow my own marijuana." "Where can you get it?" "From birdsseed." "Do you know what the seeds look like - so you can sort them out?" "Nope, you just throw a lot of seeds out into the field. When they grow you can tell real easy."

The kid seemed quite knowledgeable and self-confident. I found myself becoming quite apprehensive. Can this be done?

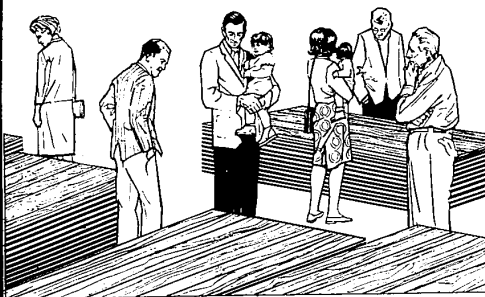
Mrs. R.B., Westland

A. Not any more. Birdsseed used to contain a fair proportion of seeds from the cannabis (marijuana) plant. They contain a considerable amount of nutritional oils. Since the advent of marijuana abuse, these seeds have either been eliminated or sterilized. (Rape seeds, oddly enough, are still present.)

The next question that arises would be if the sterilized seeds could be consumed for effect. The answer is no: the active ingredient in marijuana is concentrated in the resin (gummy substance) secreted, not in the seeds.

The child will not be harmed, but his parents should be advised - in a low-keyed manner - that their child has expressed such a desire to experiment.

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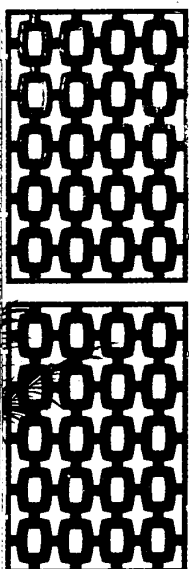
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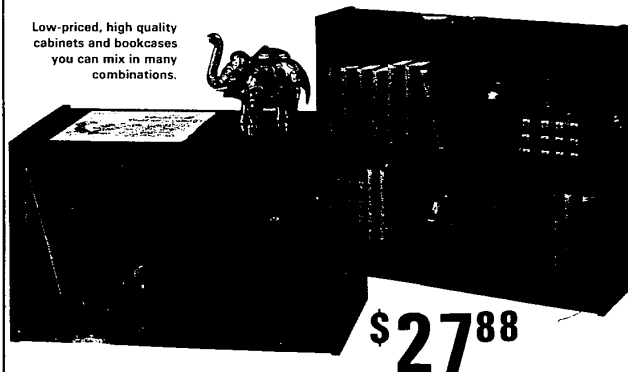
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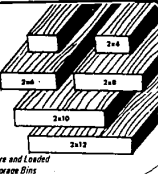
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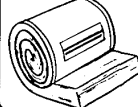
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