

HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME

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 - ★ FINISH THE ATTIC
 - ★ FIX-UP YOUR KITCHEN
 - ★ JAZZ UP THE BASEMENT
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PO-BOX
Drugs

Do Pot, Driving Mix?

Questions should be sent to the Community Commission on Drug Abuse, P.O. BOX DRUGS, Livonia, Mich. 48151.

Q. I smoke grass and like it; it makes me feel good, and since my senses aren't affected, it doesn't interfere with driving a car. I have taken a bit of "mesc" but don't dig it because my senses weren't all there. My parents are set against grass, but do they realize that drinking and driving don't mix - you have no control and brain cell damage can occur. These things don't happen with grass.

A. First, you probably can write off the "mesc" (mescaline) bit. It's a rarity around here. If all the mescaline claimed to be sold in this area actually were being shipped in, the skies would be blackened with cargo planes coming from the great southwest.

What is being sold here for mescaline is, in order of likelihood, 1) "speed" 2) nothing, 3) LSD or 4) animal tranquilizers and other assorted dangerous drugs.

Your certainty that marijuana does not impair your driving is a natural assumption. After all, one of the most common effects of this drug is an increase in self-confidence (and a decrease in self-criticism). It's pretty well established by now that marijuana may produce a "floating sensation" and a distortion of time and space relationships.

Frankly, what has not been established is the precise effect of these on a driver. Only simulated tests have been done, and they are not definitive. Remember that entering a busy expressway from a ramp requires more coordination than landing a giant airliner.

With this in mind, it becomes apparent that programming a meaningful simulated test, with all the many variables, is not easy. Why there have been no tests done under actual driving conditions may possibly be due to the increasingly high cost of automobiles and insurance.

We'd have to agree that there is a lot of hypocrisy in that alcohol, a known killer on the highways, is socially acceptable while marijuana is not. The response should not be to relax attitudes about marijuana (at least until more facts are in), but to consider tightening restrictions on drunken driving.

England has done this already. And in Finland "respectable" business and professional men are sentenced to hard labor along with common "drunks" for driving violations connected with drinking.

Finally, it should be mentioned that one of the greatest dangers on our highways today is that person taking prescription or patent medicines which can affect driving performance. When almost every cold remedy on the market has to bear the legend "Do not drive or operate machinery while taking this preparation", even the mild psychedelics, such as marijuana, should be treated with the same respect.

Q. I keep seeing the term "O.D." or "O.D.ed" lately in articles about drugs. What does it mean?

A. The term "O.D." is an abbreviation for "overdose." It is used almost always with reference to heroin, and usually implies a fatal overdose. This generally conjures up an image of someone trying to get so high that he kills himself with an excess of the drug.

In actuality, the problem is that the one thing an addict is sure of is that the heroin he buys has been cut (diluted) many times before he buys it. He has to compensate for this by using a larger amount to even hold off withdrawal. To do this he has literally to shoot in the dark.

If he guesses wrong - if the drug is less diluted than he thinks - he overdoses himself. Death may be almost instantaneous, but is almost never intentional. The other danger to the addict is that he is at the complete mercy of his pusher or source.

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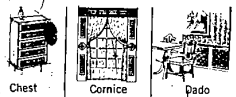
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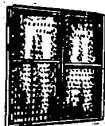
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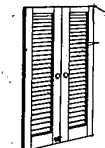
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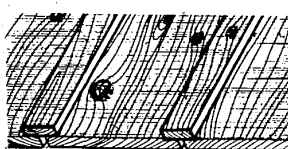
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12'	1.44	1.99	2.88	3.66	3.36
14'	1.68	2.32	3.19	4.20	3.92
16'	1.92	2.65	3.49	4.80	4.48

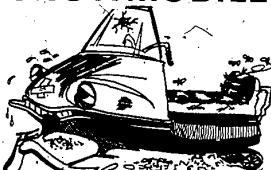
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