

# The Law And The Hippie—One Officer's View

By BILL NEUBAUER  
Sentinel Staff Writer

"The young hippies are sheep, the older ones are exploiters." So says Police Chief Gerald Pittenger of Scotts Valley.

In an interview covering the law enforcement and social problems created by hippies, he added:

"As the young hippies mature, they start admitting to themselves that the life isn't the Utopia they thought it would be. They then try to catch up with what they have lost, usually attempting to do so without too much loss of face.

"Most of the older men and women who remain in the culture are exceptions who do so for profit. They exploit the young, sheeplike hippies in various ways, politically or financially and sometimes even sexually. As a father, I feel a particular pity for the young hippies. They can be hurt so badly in so many ways before



Chief Gerald Pittenger

they mature enough to recognize they have much to learn."

The term "hippie" is defined by Pittenger as "a radical and

drug abusing individual." It is so used throughout this article.

He stressed: "I don't think of a hippie as a person with long hair or a beard or necessarily dirty or unkempt or dressed differently, although these are hippie symbols to society. A hippie may be a combination of these things, too, but I don't think you can identify one by long hair, say. The most outstanding characteristics of the people I call hippies are their radical philosophy and their drug abuse. I can show my conception of a hippie. A lot of drugs, especially acid, change their minds so much and also affect their physical appearance and their physical way of life."

Pittenger said he is concerned about the hippie problem for two reasons, each of which is equally disturbing to him as a law enforcement officer.

"One big worry," he said, "is the influence they are having upon the rest of society.

It is a broad influence, broader than many people realize. Their philosophy, their way of life and their disregard for anyone else have many effects upon society. Their influence can be very damaging to youth.

"The other big worry I have regarding hippies is what they are doing to themselves. As a police officer I am responsible for the protection of all members of society, and I see things happening to these people that horrify me."

Example:

One night in Scotts Valley, when The Barn was still operating off Granite Creek Road, Pittenger said, two women only 20 years old came driving in from San Jose after taking LSD at home. Within a half-hour after their arrival one woman was feeling the full effect of the LSD. She was taken out to the parking lot. When Pittenger arrived, she was lying on the ground, making obscene gestures and begging to be se-

duced. She was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. She later had no recollection of what she had done or any realization of what could have happened to her.

"The horrifying thing here," Pittenger said, "is that she was married, the mother of a young child. Six months or a year later she could be driving on the freeway with the child in the car and have a recurrence of the LSD effects, and both she and the baby could be victims of a traffic accident."

Society must be concerned about the hippies, Pittenger said.

"They are a contamination of society," he stressed. "Basically, they have to steal, it's a general thing in their existence because the great majority of them have no money. Another problem is health. This is not played up too much, but the VD rate among them has really skyrocketed, especially among the heavier drug users.

"Another problem is that created by the runaway juvenile (17 and under) and minor (18 to 20). The hippie life, as these people see it, is very attractive. These young people with their undeveloped minds are rebelling against society before they have even gotten a chance to know what society is about. They have no idea of what they are getting into. They don't have the education or training to cope with life or to protect themselves. They are still in the learning phase of their life and in most cases they can't provide for themselves."

These young people complain bitterly about being "hassled," Pittenger said, when the police pick them up. "It never occurs to them," he said, "that the law enforcement agencies are seeking to help them while they can still be helped."

The young people usually get onto drugs because the older hippies they meet advocate drug use.

"The advocates are being honest when they advocate drug use," Pittenger said. "They really feel in their mind that this is really good. They become fanatics on the subject. To them it's like getting religion. They never see themselves as people trying to escape from real life, and they never see the effects the drugs are having upon them."

The young people find themselves in a jungle world, sooner or later, Pittenger said. They must get food and shelter in one way or another, and they must pay for their drugs.

"Basically," he said, "they have to steal, or live off the land, as they express it. Some, of course, do have money and are out for fun, and others eventually get checks from home with the understanding they not come home. But the great majority are poor and must fend for themselves as best they can.

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This is where disregard for others comes in."

For young girls, Pittenger said, the problem is often solved through sex. "Free love may be their contribution in a commune," he said, "or her body may be used for profit. Often they pay for transportation with their bodies, willingly or willingly. Sometimes the rape results in lasting injuries. I think a woman loses more through drugs and sex than a man does. In a lot of cases there are effects of the life upon the babies she may have."

For most in the hippie way of life there comes a time of withdrawal, Pittenger said. But for some, the older ones in particular, the return to society is hard.

"This may be why the older ones are usually the exploiters," Pittenger said, "the ones who get into drug traffic. Of course, other older ones are leaders, the militant radicals who manipulate the younger ones like sheep from one so-called dissent to another so-called dissent. You don't find many leaders under 20."

"But even though they are leaders, these people have a problem, too. That's the age factor. As these leaders get older they have more and more difficulty gaining acceptance from the young. This is why, I think, the older ones tend to try to be super hippies, it's an attempt to keep their following."

Pittenger said the police are in the ideal position to see the more horrible aspects of the hippie life that seems so attractive to some young people.

"This is one of the reasons

the police take many of the actions they do," he said. "It's hard work, incidentally. But it is part of our responsibility as law officers to protect these young people from themselves and others, to spare them a lot of tragedy. They may call this harassment, but it is not. Law enforcement begins with crime prevention. We have a duty to protect all society, and this includes young people who are not as knowledgeable as they may think."

Pittenger said that a crack-down on hippies is long overdue because their number is increasing, drug abuse is increasing, the crime rate is increasing.

But society must find the answer to the problem not through vigilante action, he stressed, but by paying closer attention to its children.

Sheriff Doug James is certainly correct," Pittenger said, "when he says parents should know where their kids are, what

they are doing, and share in their activities by taking them to the beaches and elsewhere. Too many parents are pawning their children off to live their own lives, and the law should be more strict in holding them accountable.

"In the home the parents must create an atmosphere that includes not only a demanded love and respect for the parents but an equal love and respect for the children. Then problems of growing up can be worked out, and the kid will have no reason to feel the hippie life of irresponsibility and self-indulgence is the answer he's seeking. That answer leads to tragedy for not only the family but for society."

Pittenger is president of the Pop Warner football team called the Valley Rams, and is involved in other youth work in Scotts Valley. He and his wife, Alice, have three children: Diann, Devon and David.

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