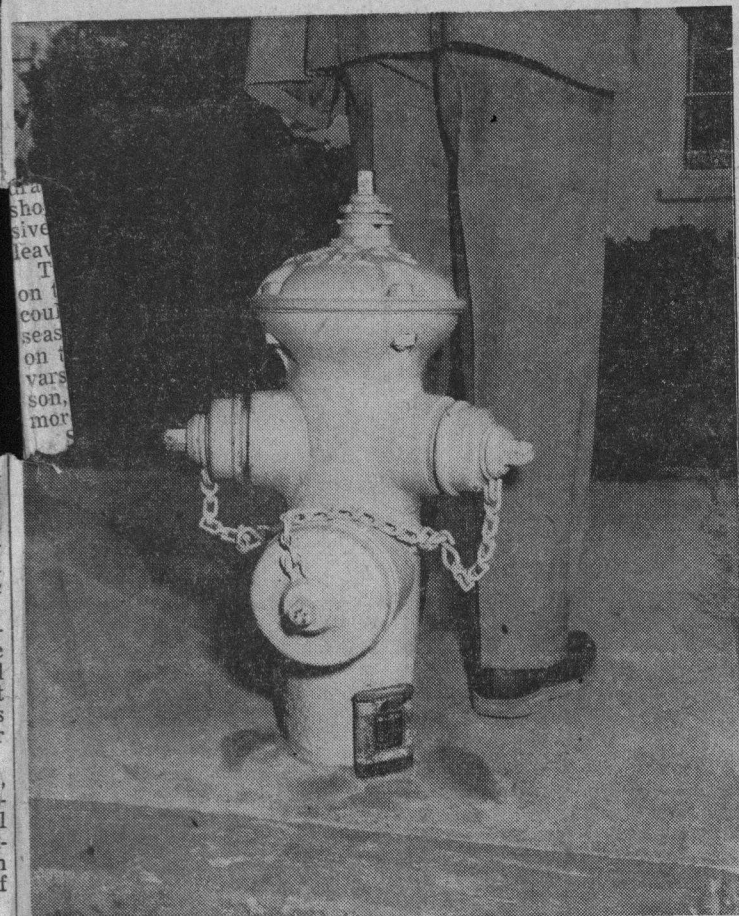


It Has Value -- To Dope Addict



When a dope addict makes a deal for narcotics, money is often exchanged at a bar or some other secluded place. The peddler or pusher will seldom trust

his customers and will have the dope staked out, for example, under a fire hydrant, as shown above.

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Lawmen See No Real Narcotics Problem In Santa Cruz County

By Wally Trabing

According to the combined opinions of most of the narcotic-wise lawmen of Watsonville and Santa Cruz and the sheriff's department, there is no real narcotics problem in this area.

"It is silly to say, however," observed a Santa Cruz county police official last week, "that you can't pick up a marijuana cigarette in the county or that there is no dope around."

There have been seven arrests on dope charges in the county in the last five years, according to Police Detective Geno Pini. The charges include drug store robberies involving the theft of drugs.

Pini said that at least two of the arrests included narcotic salesmen or "pushers."

Watsonville's Police Chief Frank E. Osmer says that during the last five years, narcotic arrests have been sporadic. Because of the influx of migratory workers, many of them Mexicans and some "wetbacks," for seasonal field crops, Watsonville gets the brunt of the users.

"Prevalence of narcotics in this area is a situation that never ends. In a way it is a problem with us, and in itself it is a serious one," he said.

"We have flare ups. When we catch one addict, the catch usually leads us to another one until word spreads around that we're on their tails and they either leave town or go into hiding.

"Most of the old Chinese who brought the addiction of opium over here from China, have died. The young ones wouldn't think of taking dope," he said.

During the last month, two elderly Chinese were sentenced a year each in the county jail for using opium. Another man was given six months for using marijuana.

Some months ago local sheriff's deputies helped federal narcotics agents capture two men who were bringing more than one and a half million dollars worth of heroin into the county to make a business deal.

This type of "pop up" cases keep police authorities on the alert.

Gary Smith, investigator for the sheriff's office, said that in the areas outside the cities it is rare to find a user nowadays.

"We know most of those who are licensed users for medical reasons and we keep our eyes on the others," he said.

In fact, Smith believes that the narcotic traffic here is at such a low ebb that the situation gives rise to another problem.

"When you have an area that is almost free of users it becomes open territory for the big operator.

"The wholesalers won't operate near people who are addicted to dope, because the addict won't keep his mouth shut. He'll do anything to get more dope, and that includes squealing on a dope salesman.

"Wholesalers usually import opium, heroin and other dope in large quantities. They break it down for the peddlers who sell it to pushers who have their addicted customers.

"The wholesaler and the peddler usually are not addicts. They are meticulously careful to keep their identity a secret."

He said when dope and money exchanges are made an elaborate system of dodges and signals are carried out to avoid being identified and interfered with by narcotics agents.

One of the sharpest narcotics experts in the county is Police Sergeant Ben Jacobson of Watsonville.

"We cleaned out the bad places some years ago," he said. "and now we concentrate on keeping the addicts on the run.

"The poor devils are chased from town to town. The police get to know them and keep them moving; because if the users are allowed to gather in a town it is an invitation for a pusher or peddler to set up shop."

The Watsonville police department has used a clever trick to rid itself of addicts.

When an addict is caught he will sometimes be offered a proposition, Jacobson said. He will be offered a "fix" (a shot of dope) if he will lead the police to the pusher or person from whom he bought his dope.

Once the addict starts feeling the terrible, agonizing pains that rack an addict's body when a shot of dope starts to wear off, he will agree to anything.

He will do one of two things, Jacobson said. He will lead the

police to his contact or he will leave town, never to return, because he has double-crossed the police and he knows they will "throw the book" at him if he is caught again there.

"We gain in either case," smiled Jacobson.

He said there are many ways an experienced police officer can spot an addict.

"For example, you spot a guy dragging his way down the street as if he had no energy. Next time you see him he's walking down the street with a peppy step looking as if he owned the world.

"Many times an addict will spend his food money for dope. His eyes are sunken and he looks generally undernourished," he said.

Jacobson said that pushers, or small time salesmen are almost always users. They are forced to buy and make contacts of their own or introduce new addicts in order to earn enough money to keep them in dope.

"Narcotics is the crookedest racket in the world," said Jacobson. "once a man is 'hooked' and becomes addicted, he is at the mercy of the salesman. He is sold diluted stuff, or is told that it is very difficult to get and must pay a higher price."

Jacobson added that the narcotics traffic boomed when prohibition was brought to an end. The big shots, used to easy money, switched to dope.

Another situation which altered the narcotic picture, according to Jacobson, took place when General Chiang Kai-shek made opium smoking illegal in China. When this happened growing of the poppy-weed shifted to Mexico and getting it across the thousands of miles of thinly guarded border was much easier than smuggling it across the ocean.

When the Reds took over, the law was repealed, but opium raising still exists in Mexico.

There are many techniques used in catching the narcotics user and salesmen, but the most important element involved is patience and time, Jacobson said.

"We can deal with users and sometimes we can track down a small-time peddler, but when we think there might be something bigger involved in this area, we turn the case over to the federal or state narcotic bureau.

"These agents spend months, sometimes years, on a case. They can put a man on it for a long period, where we haven't the man power nor the funds," he said.

Selling and exchanging of marijuana or dope is carried out with great pains and secrecy. A user may spend a week in bars and other places, seeking out a pusher.

When he makes his contact, the pusher must check around the best he can to determine whether or not the man is a genuine user, a stoolie or a cop.

When the pusher decides to make the sale he may meet the addict at the bar and the money may be exchanged under the bar. Then the pusher may tell the addict that he can find his can of stuff under a fire hydrant on a nearby corner, said Jacobson.

New addicts are usually introduced to marijuana first at a drinking party. It can start out as joke. Some may consider it daring or smart.

But one can lead to another and then the natural sequence is dope addiction. And from then on a man or woman becomes just so much dead weight to society.

Meetings Set For Regional ABC Field Officers

Sacramento (P). — Malcolm Harris, acting director of the State alcoholic beverage control department, has announced three regional meetings will be held to brief ABC field officers on problems and policies.

The schedule: San Francisco, today, for San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and Santa Rosa districts.

Sacramento, tomorrow, for Sacramento, Fresno, Stockton, Marysville, Redding and Woodland districts.

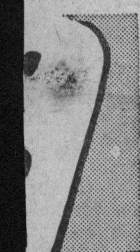
Los Angeles, Friday, for Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Bernardino districts.

Harris said the meetings would include district administrators and liquor control officers.

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