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Arrest Records Tell How Drug Abuse Problem's Growing

By BOB LIGON
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CAPITOLA — The history of drug abuse in Santa Cruz County is pretty well reflected in arrest records kept at Capitola.

Prior to 1966, Capitola police had made virtually no arrests of young persons on drug charges. In 1966 there were seven arrests; in 1967 there were 12; in 1968 there were 98, and so far this year there have been about 200 arrests.

Other local law enforcement agencies report similar percentages — and are quick to point out that the actual arrests represent only a tiny fraction of the number of persons using drugs.

"The problem sometimes seems insurmountable, but it can be solved," said Capitola Police Lt. Dave Esty, whose work with young persons in recent years has gained him the confidence of youths and adults.

"We have right now the tremendous talent needed to handle this problem," said Esty. "It's just a matter of pulling it all together."

Esty was referring to public agencies, such as the County Health Department, the County Education Department, probation and rehabilitation center, psychiatric care, and various work programs.

"What's needed is a program designed to use all of these services," he said. "The problem now is that most of these agencies act as separate entities."

Esty said education on drug abuse is needed for both parents and the young. He said education for youngsters should start in the fourth or fifth grades.

His comments were echoed by Michael Gordon, director of the Santa Cruz Drug Abuse Prevention Center, which was established several years ago to help young persons kick the drug habit. The center op-

erates solely on donations from the public.

The center, said Gordon, is so busy helping young people get off the drug habit, that it has little time for preventative work.

"We have neither the time, space, or money to do the job that must be done," said Gordon.

Any education program to tell the youths the dangers of drug abuse must be "realistic — based on fact not myth," said Gordon.

He said he feels that "scare tactics" sometimes do more harm than good.

Gordon said the center has found that the best teaching method is to have young persons who have "gone the drug route to tell the other youths how it really is".

"Once a youth is on drugs, you have to almost change his whole philosophy of life to get him off it," said Gordon.

"We use the power of God, love, to show that it can be done," said Gordon.

Many staff members at the center have kicked the drug habit and are helping themselves by helping other youths who have the habit.

Gordon says that youths with a drug problem gain the assurance they can whip the problem by talking to someone who has.

Gordon says the drug problem locally is growing by "leaps and bounds", judging from the youths coming into the center for help and the calls they get from parents.

Gordon and Esty both said parents should not "panic" when they find their youngsters are using drugs. Communication with the youngster, they say, is the only way to reach the problem and solve it.

Overaction can cut off all lines of communication, sometimes making a cure very difficult, they said.

Both men said the problem isn't drugs per se, but the mental "disorder" of persons who feel drugs are necessary.

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors today will consider a proposal to establish a countywide committee to tackle the drug problem.

The committee is being proposed by County Supervisor Ralph Sanson, who says he thinks the drug problem has reached "crisis proportions" among young people.

Dr. Richard Svhis, county health officer, said various county departments are also working on a program to combat drug abuse, as similar to the type program suggested by Esty.

A.F. OFFICER SAYS

Nation Must Have Economic Strength

MONTEREY — The economic strength of a nation is as important as military strength in building national power.

That's the opinion of Air Force Col. Robert T. Hof, member of a team of military men presenting a 10-day seminar on national security here.

The seminar is designed to give military men and civilians a better knowledge of the factors which comprise national security.

"The basic factors underlying the wealth of nations include national resources, know-how, capital, and

Old Mansion Sold For Development