

the drug corner

Drug Information Center staff prepared this column

The coming of fall and its accompanying rain usually signals mushrooms in Oregon. Among the numerous and diverse genera of fungi found in the Pacific Northwest, the Psilocybe is the one most prized, undoubtedly owing to its psychedelic constituents.

Within the Eugene area alone there are probably half a dozen species of Psilocybe. All these species contain psilocybin and psilocin, which are classified as indole hallucinogens and have chemical structures as well as effects similar to LSD.

These substances produce their most noted effects on the central nervous system, which is composed of the brain and spinal cord. The psychoactivity varies with the individual and is usually dependent upon his or her cognitive set and the environmental setting.

Psilocybin is believed to interfere with the neuro-chemical transmission in the brain which is involved with perceptual processes. Most users report alterations of auditory, visual and tactile senses.

For example, colors appear brighter and there may be visual patterns when the eyes are closed. Sounds may be perceived more acutely, especially music. Synesthesia, a crossing of senses — "seeing sounds" — has also been noted with some individuals.

Physiologically, psilocybin has been shown to cause pupillary dilation and slight increases in pulse, blood pressure and body temperature. Most often psilocybin intoxication results in a euphoric experience, however high doses of the drug have been known to bring about disorientation and/or a panic-like state.

Usually those unpleasant situa-

tions can be managed by reducing incoming stimuli and offering reassurance — hand holding — about the drug effects and duration of action.

Because of the popularity of psilocybin-containing mushrooms, the numbers of people collecting the fungi increased dramatically during the last few years. Unfortunately, this has led to problems with local property owners who do not appreciate "crazed hippies" trampling their fences and scaring livestock as they seek the consciousness-altering fungi.

"Shroomers" should know that possession of psilocybin — classified as a "dangerous drug" in Oregon legal statutes — makes them liable for felony prosecution. However, so far individuals caught in Lane County have been prosecuted for trespassing only.

Another hazard of mushroom foraging is poisoning through mistaken identification. Many "shroomers" don't realize that there are some extremely toxic species which at least superficially resemble psilocybin mushrooms.

Each year there are usually a few cases of mushroom poisoning requiring medical attention at Sacred Heart Hospital. Shroomers can avoid this unpleasant experience if they take the time to become familiar with the hallucinogenic and poisonous species and if they submit samples of their mushrooms to the Drug Information Center for analysis.

One good source of mushroom information is Gary Menser's *Hallucinogenic and Poisonous Mushrooms — Field Guide*, recommended because it accurately describes most of the locally-found species. "Keying-out" a mushroom according to its spore print, fruiting cycle and range, habitat and general structure reduces the chance of poisoning.

In conclusion, the D.I.C. encourages those interested in "shrooming" to stop by the center before going into the field. We can probably save you time searching for psilocybin and the inconvenience of mushroom poisoning.

Below are the results of the drug analysis project for October 1978.

Alleged Amphetamine Seventeen samples submitted, actual contents as follows: 1 amphetamine only; 6 amphetamine, caffeine and unidentified substance; 1 caffeine only; 1 caffeine and ephedrine; 1 caffeine and pseudoephedrine; 2 ephedrine, phenobarbital and theophylline; 1 ephedrine and phenylephrine; 1 methamphetamine and unidentified substance.

Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are decongestants with CNS stimulatory properties. Phenobarbital is an anticonvulsant with CNS depression effects. Theophylline is a metabolic stimulant similar to caffeine. Phenylephrine is a vasopressor agent (blood pressure raising) that has little CNS activity.

Alleged Cocaine Ten samples submitted, actual contents as follows: 1 cocaine only; 1 cocaine, caffeine and mannitol; 1 cocaine, ephedrine, lidocaine and mannitol; 1 cocaine and glucose; 2 cocaine and inositol; 1 cocaine and lidocaine; 1 cocaine lidocaine and mannitol; 1 cocaine, am-

phetamine, ephedrine and lactose.

Mannitol, glucose, inositol and lactose are sugar cutting agents with no nervous system activity. Lidocaine is a local anesthetic having no CNS activity.

Alleged LSD Two samples submitted, actual contents as follows: 2 LSD only.

Alleged Cannabis Products Seven samples submitted, actual contents as follows: 1 unidentified substance; 1 nicotine; 1 No Drugs Detected; 4 THC and other cannabinoids (active ingredient in marijuana).

Alleged MDA Three samples submitted, actual contents as follows: 3 MDA and unidentified substance(s).



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Faith series scheduled

Speakers including actor Joseph Wiseman and Israeli scholar and religious figure Pinchas Peli will visit Eugene this winter for a lecture series on "Faith and the Human Condition."

The four-part series is being sponsored by the Campus Christian Ministry, the Jewish Student Union at the University and Temple Beth Israel in Eugene.

Included in the series will be a talk Dec. 7 by anti-Nazi crusader Beate Klarsfeld on "Wherever They May Be: One Woman's Moral Crusade Against Nazism;" a talk Jan. 18 by Jewish scholar Max Vorsepan on "Jewish Ethnic Power: Myth or Reality;" "Dramatic Readings from Jewish Literature" Feb. 22 by Joseph Wiseman; and a talk March 1 by Pinchas Peli on "Faith and the Human Condition: Historical Perspective and Contemporary Issues."

All the lectures will be delivered at 8 p.m. at the Central Presbyterian Church at 1475 Ferry St. in Eugene.

Tickets are now available for purchase at the Campus Christian Ministry headquarters at 1414 Kincaid St. in Eugene. General admission cost is \$10 for the series and \$3 for individual lectures.

Tickets may also be purchased through the Jewish Student Union.

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