

# Drugging America's Children

by Eldridge Lewis

America's multi-billion dollar "War on Drugs" aimed at illegal street drugs is far from comprehensive as a strategy. "It's warfare without adequate reconnaissance," says Dr. Burnett Rucker, a physician who practices in the heart of the Black community of Los Angeles. "The whole campaign disregards the unnecessary and frequent drugging of children that legally goes on everyday. We are, in effect, trying to clamp down on drug addiction on the streets while we are busy making drug addicts in the schools."

Rucker says that the increasing use of drugs in schools across the country has now taken on alarming proportions. "This trend of giving more and more children addictive mind affecting drugs, in some cases simply because teachers are inept at keeping students interested and disciplined, must be brought under control."

Part of the problem, he says, is that psychiatry has expanded its diagnosis of childhood mental disorders. In the last 10 years, the number of children assessed as mentally ill has increased over 10 times or 1000 percent. Yet investigation reveals that the reason for this is not so much a change in children, but in the methods used to diagnose psychological disorders. Now there virtually isn't a single aspect of any child's normal behavior that could not be judged as a "symptom" of one of the many new classifications of "mental illness."

If a child is simply inattentive, impulsive or highly active, he or she could for instance, be diagnosed as suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Some of the signs that teachers are advised to watch for include not finishing things, difficulty concentrating on school work, lack of organizational ability, needing supervision, calling out in class, acting before thinking, always on the go, and being easily distracted.

Many of these symptoms are the very things that poor teaching and lack of classroom control would bring about. Yet, it is the teachers whose sole reports are often the basis for putting problem children on drugs.

"Ritalin" is probably the most frequent psychiatric drug dispensed to school children to counter attention difficulties. Some researchers warn that the drug is dangerous and addictive. The documented lengthy list of side effects from "Ritalin" include anxiety, insomnia, depression, headaches, fevers, epileptic seizures, convulsions, and many other reactions that psychiatrists usually put down to further "mental illness."

During withdrawal from Ritalin, which often lasts up to a month after the dosage has been reduced or stopped altogether, there is even a serious risk of suicide. And continuing mental side effects from the drug frequently extend years into the future, even after the child has stopped taking it.

Mental health reform groups across the country are now beginning to suggest that many childhood "mental illnesses" are really just the side effects of psychiatric drugs used initially to control minor behavior problems.

Added to the situation, according to Rucker, is the fact that virtually all the problems that drugs such as Ritalin are used to treat can now be handled without the use of drugs at all.

"The real losers, as psychiatry turns more and more of its attention to children, are the young. Ritalin, like other amphetamines (such as 'speed') is a very serious drug to use. There is a very real possibility that at some point in the future there will be a sharp realization that no one should ever have been put on it in the first place."

"But the real issue is that children should not be put on any drug to solve problems that can be resolved by improving the educational system. At this point, to continue the widespread psychiatric drugging of America's children is an atrocity."



Geraldine H. Pearson

## Pearson Earns Doctorate At Oregon State

Geraldine H. Pearson, a Central Point Rd. resident and staff member at Portland Community College, has earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Oregon State University College of Education in the field of operations analysis.

A graduate committee has recommended that Pearson's dissertation, "Strategic Problem Solving in the Community College: An Analytic Model", be published since it offers a new prescriptive model for problem solving in academic and other settings, Pearson said.

Pearson earned a B.A. and M.A. in English from the University of Oregon and University of Portland, respectively. She has been on the PCC staff for 16 years, working presently on special projects for the college.

Pearson also was appointed recently to the board of trustees of the Pacific International Livestock Exposition.

## Award & Dance Time

Rose City Connection will be hosting its first annual Scholarship Award & Volunteer Recognition Dance on Saturday, May 23, 1987 at the Viscount Hotel, 1441 N.E. 2nd. The dance will be held from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. The cost is \$5.00 adults, and \$3.00 for students and seniors. Dupree Casey will be the guest D.J. Time is from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.

At the dance, scholarships will be presented to several Black high school seniors from the Portland metro area who are planning to further their education after graduating this spring. Volunteers and supporters of Rose City Connection will also be recognized.

Rose City Connection is a volunteer organization whose purpose is to raise money to support the educational endeavors of Black students in Portland. RCC produces two major fundraisers each year, a fall fashion show held each October, and Community Team Challenges, an outdoor athletic event held each June.

The word "commando" is of South African origin, used by the Boers at the end of the last century to designate a mobile body of armed men.

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### Emanuel Course Sharpens Seniors' Driving Skills

Senior citizens who want to boost their confidence behind the wheel can sharpen their driving skills through a driver re-training program at Emanuel Hospital & Health Center. The "55 Alive Mature Driving" class, developed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), teaches defensive driving for persons 50 and older. The course is taught by older volunteers and covers aging's effects on driving and how to apply basic rules of the road and prevent accidents.

The two-day class costs \$7 and will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 25 and 26. Some insurance companies will give a discount on the premium after the course is completed. A meal discount in the hospital's Courtyard Cafe is included. To pre-register or obtain more information, call 280-4284.

### YMCA Slumber Party

The Washington County YMCA will be featuring a "Kids' Night Out" all-night slumber party for youth 6-12 years old beginning at 7:00 p.m., Friday, May 15th and ending at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, May 16th, 1987. The "Spring Fling" celebration activities will include gym games, swimming, bowling, movies, a midnight snack, and continental breakfast. The event takes place at the Merle Davies School Center, 13000 SW Farmington Rd., Beaverton. Pre-registration is mandatory since space is limited. Program fee for "Kids' Night Out" is \$13.00 for YMCA members and \$18.00 for non-members. Financial assistance is available through the YMCA office. Contact the Washington County YMCA at 294-3345 for registration information.

Maybe your scales don't show it, but the fact is your body changes its weight from minute to minute.

### PCC Interpreter Training Program Schedules Orientation Sessions

The Interpreter Training Program at Portland Community College has scheduled six orientation sessions for prospective students at Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth.

The sessions will supply information about the program and other fields related to deafness, help the prospective student decide whether or not to apply for the sign language interpretation program, provide counseling and answer questions.

Sessions will be held the evenings of April 6 and May 21, and both days and evenings August 17 and September 8.

Those who wish to attend the orientations are advised to call Chris Cady, ITP secretary, at 283-2541, Ext. 5288, to book an appointment.



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