

Sniffing: The Fun is Short-Lived

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by Roger Stwyer

As we grow older, friends pressure us more and more each day to try out sniffing inhalants, among other drugs. It often seems as though our popularity and friendships hang in the balance of our decision to say "yes" or "no" and it's difficult to refuse to try something, especially when the many possible dangers involved are unknown to the user.

In the annual report for 1978 from the Tribal Drug Program, statistics reveal the number of young people involved with sniffing inhalants, a petroleum-based product, is alarming. Over 50 per cent of the patients connected with the program were treated for the sniffing of inhalants. Those treated by the program fell between ages of seven and 21 and were all referrals from the Tribal Court. The Drug Program cannot treat a person unless through a Court order, parental permission, or by self-referral.

Why sniff?

Youngsters find access to inhalants to be very easy and very cheap. It hasn't been medically proven that inhalants have any benefit to the body, yet how do people "get off" by sniffing and being "high"?

The major reason people sniff is because they aren't aware of the many risks and dangers that are a result of sniffing. In many cases, they know the risks but don't take them seriously - the "It can't happen to me" attitude.

Temptations from friends play a major role as well as not being able to cope with today's problems. Many sniff because of boredom (lack of structured activities) and want to get away from reality. Another reason is lack of parent participation in activities or no supervision by parents.

Death is the risk

What many people didn't think was possible was the high risk of death that can be caused from sniffing. Sniffing contains different chemicals that cause damage to the vital organs of the body that is often irreversible.

Sniffing is very foreign to the body. Prescription drugs are made to blend in with the body



POPULAR BUT RISKY — A current favorite among "sniffers," typewriter correction fluid can cause heart irregularities and death of inhaled.

whereas inhalants don't blend in at all.

Sniffing of petroleum vapors (glue, gasoline, all spray paints, sprays, freon) can cause liver damage or prevent the body from producing red blood cells. Red blood cells are very important because they carry oxygen to the different parts of the body.

Damage to brain cells can occur and cannot be replaced after they are eaten away by the chemicals. There are millions of brain cells, so it doesn't matter if one loses a few. But those who persist in sniffing will start noticing that they can't do things they used to be able to do with ease.

Freon, a spray used to freeze things, is hard to find these days, but it is one of the most dangerous. Freon freezes the larynx (which is in the throat) and/or the lungs. When frozen, these organs are unable to function and death results.

Paint, cleaning fluid, and

any other spray cans contain chemicals that coat your lungs and prevent them from bringing oxygen to the body. Spray glue and cooking oils will coat the lungs with paste and clog them, which leads to death.

Inhalation of Toluene, found in almost all types of plastic cement can cause headaches, nausea, loss of appetite, a bad taste, lassitude, and impairment of coordination and reaction time. With higher concentrations, anemia, leucopenia, and enlarged liver can take place.

Depending on the person's attitude while sniffing, immediate death can happen or damage can take place the first time of intake. One very important thing to keep in mind about sniffing is that a tolerance towards sniffing begins building up immediately, therefore, more intake of inhalants is needed each time to get the same high effect.

Don't excite a sniffer

It is extremely important to keep a person under the influ-

ence of inhalants as calm and as quiet as possible. Excitement while under the influence is the primary cause of death, increasing the chance of a heart attack. Running, jumping around, and playing speeds up the heart, too, and can cause heart failure. If you do sniff, the best thing to do is lay around afterwards.

A large number of the deaths in the United States is caused by someone passing out with a plastic bag still over the mouth and nose. This causes the person to suffocate because oxygen can't reach the brain. If a person passes out after sniffing and the bag isn't completely covering the nose and mouth, the person does have a chance of living.

Lab Tests Show Wewa Victim of Inhalant

The sudden death of high school freshman Anna Wewa January 18 was caused by the inhaling or "sniffing" of a substance found in Liquid Paper, a typewriter correction fluid. State Medical Examiner William Brady's investigation into the death, completed last week, revealed that the body contained a high level of "tri-chloroethylene," a chemical compound that can cause heart irregularities in some people.

According to Dr. Brady, Anna's heart essentially "short-circuited" while she breathed the concentrated fumes of Liquid Paper. Anna and two other girls were sniffing the substance in a high school rest room during the noon hour. The victim was rushed to Mountain View Hospital where life-saving efforts failed to revive her.

"Tri-chloroethylene does not poison the body like arsenic," said Dr. Brady. "In a small percentage of people it is a direct irritation or stimulus to the heart, causing irregularities," he explained. In Anna's case, her heart reacted immediately to the inhalant and stopped beating.

"This is not an effect that occurs only with tri-chloroethylene," noted Brady. Glue, hair spray and other popular "highs" contain similar compounds, all

What can parents do?

Very few parents know their kids who are sniffing and very few children know their parents. Children who sniff tend to have a fear of their parents. More communication is needed between the parents and the children if sniffing is to stop. Grades dropping, skipping classes, staying out late, are a few characteristics parents should look for when trying to pinpoint if their child is sniffing.

The advice of the DO IT NOW FOUNDATION of Phoenix, Arizona, is sound — "Your best bet for keeping health is to go on smelling the sweet smells of mother nature's flowers, not the smelly, sticky by-products of an industrial society that pollute you inside, as well as the world outside."

in the hydrocarbon family and all dangerous.

"The message to the kids is not 'Hey, stay away from Liquid Paper.' It's that if you're going to screw around with sniffing these substances you should realize that you are a potential victim of any one of them."

Products containing "tri-chloroethylene" and other hydrocarbons are not hazardous when used properly, Brady stressed. But when they are concentrated in a paper or plastic bag and breathed deeply they can be killers. Tri-chloroethylene has been used safely as an anaesthetic, but in a controlled environment where the heart rate is monitored and artificial breathing provided.

Jefferson County District Attorney Mike Sullivan said that the sales of Liquid Paper in Madras has been "brisk" in the weeks before the Wewa incident. "But you can't take off the market everything that's dangerous," he remarked. "Education is the answer."

When parents see kids in possession of products that they suspect are being abused, they should inquire about their use, advised Sullivan. Information is available to both parents and youth at the schools and the local drug program.

Powerhouse Should Provide Expensive, Profitable Energy

by Cynthia Stowell

Energy generated from a powerhouse at the Pelton Reregulating dam will be expensive, engineering consultant Jerry Dibble told Tribal Council Monday, but there will be a market for it in 1982 when the proposed project would be completed.

The reservation's energy needs, which are a third of the powerhouse's potential output, if the Tribes choose to form a Public Utility District, Dibble continued.

In reporting the progress of the Tribes' hydroelectric feasibility study January 29, Dibble explained several construction, transmission and funding alternatives being considered. But the success of the project seemed to boil down to one item — the power sales contract.

PGE operates the reregulating dam that spans the Deschutes River and rests partly on land owned by Tribal member Charlie Jackson. PGE's Pelton-Round Butte contract with the Tribes provides that electrical

generating facilities may be constructed on the site at the Tribes' expense. The power would belong to the Tribes for their use or sale.

Dibble has estimated that the value of the power in 1982 will be 42.6 mills (4.26 cents) per kilowatt hour, nearly four times the present cost of PGE's Round Butte power. A sales contract must pin down a figure high enough to ensure that the Tribes get a return on their investment, said Dibble.

The consultant feels that the 81 million kilowatt hours of energy that the facility produces per year will be increasingly attractive as the state's energy demands grow. Noting that this is equivalent to 135,000 barrels of oil, Dibble quipped, "That's 135,000 barrels we won't have to buy from the Arabs."

While the final feasibility report is nearly completed and the cost figures roughly calculated, much work remains before an application can be made to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a license. In

addition to developing a power sales contract, the Tribes must draft a memo of understanding with PGE about construction and operational responsibilities.

Other tasks will include conferring with fisheries interests concerning provisions made at the dam for protection of fishery resources, and reaching a satisfactory agreement with landowner Charlie Jackson.

Most important of all will be the presentation of the project plans and requested appropriations to the tribal membership for approval by referendum. This may happen in early spring.

Tribal management and Dibble feel the pressure is on to launch the project due to the rising costs of construction. Dibble figures the Tribes are losing \$200,000 for every month of delay from inflation. Total anticipated cost of construction is approximately \$25,831,000.

Several methods of funding the project are being considered, offering significantly different rates of return on Tribal capital. The favored formula appears to

be 40 per cent debt financing (most likely a revenue bond), 20 per cent federal grant, and 40 per cent Tribal capital.

"One hundred per cent debt financing would make for a marginal project since the debt service would make annual costs soar," said Dibble. The optimum funding formula and sales contract could bring to the Tribes a reasonable income, keeping pace with rising operational expenses.

Design drawings for the project show a single bulb turbine inside a powerhouse built apart from the spillway. Dibble explained that construction would involve breaking the existing dam, diverting the water, installing the powerhouse, and rebuilding the dam.

Tribal attorney Dennis Karnopp noted that utilization of an existing dam makes this proposed project "significant."

"Everyone is concerned about the environmental impact of electrical power generation," he remarked. "This is a significant project because power can be generated at an existing dam

without any adverse environmental impact."

A transmission line would most likely originate from the roof of the powerhouse and tie into Pacific Power and Light's Warm Springs Substation three miles distant. A second optional line would connect the powerhouse to PGE's Pelton Dam, also three miles distant.

Dibble maintains that if the Tribes ever want to set up their own public utility, a tie-in to PP&L is important. But a connection with the PGE system would also be useful for handling energy surplus.

Cheap power for the reservation would not be among the immediate benefits of the project, according to Dibble. But with the production and transmission of energy the Tribes would be opening the door to establishing their own public utility as well as bringing in revenue on an annual basis.

The final report on the feasibility of the hydroelectric plant should be completed this month