Pot still most popular in MIT drug scene

By Lee Giguere

Despite changing patterns of drug use in recent years, marijuana, the infamous "weed," remains the chief topic in discussions of drug use at MIT.

About a month ago, the plant made news (or more appropriately didn't make the news) when a "garden" was found in a dormitory closet.

Estimates of on-campus use vary widely. Captain James Olivieri of the Campus Patrol says "pot seems to be on a reduced scale." Two dormitory residents polled by this reporter differed in their estimations: one reported that "the use of marijuana is small but there," adding that there "may be more people smoking than two years ago," another stated that "smoking" is "something that doesn't start until the guy's a sophomore," and listed the amount of use to the time of the term. A member of one of MIT's 29 fraternities said he would "like to have more..." working on the drug issue.

Outside of marijuana, the drug market appears small.

Olivieri claims that with regards to hard drugs, "we don't have a serious problem on campus." The scene, in particular, he says, has dropped off from a 1969-70 peak, since then the number of "serious cases" seen by the Patrol has tapered off.

The chief market for speed is "an aid in studying; one student reported "I know people who would like to get speed to study on, but it's really hard to get." Another student commented "I don't know of anyone in the house who trades -- it couple of years ago there were. Nor did he know of anyone using hallucinogens.

Dr. Alfred J. Kosman of MIT's psychiatric staff, however, pointed out what he felt to be two alarming trends in drug usage. Methaqualone, known as Quaalude or sopor, is reaching the black market, he said, after being pushed on doctors by drug manufacturers. A non-barbiturate hypnotic and cortical depressant, the drug produces a stoned, dreamlike state.

The use of marijuana doesn't attract much attention any more. Last spring, about 150 people gathered on MIT's Great Court one afternoon for what was billed as the "J. Edgar Hoover Memorial Dope Party." In spite of the blatant illegality of the event -- it was reported that many people "blithely distributed cannabis products through the crowd" -- no arrests were made by the Cambridge Police narcotics division plainclothesmen reportedly present.

"It's come out into the open a lot," commented one senior in reference to grass. Four years ago, he said, "I only knew three or four people out of a group of seventy who were using grass, although there could have been more." Currently, about half the members of his 32-member living group smoke.

What does MIT's Campus Patrol see as the principal source of the campus "drug problem?"

"The most dangerous situation," says Olivieri, "occurs when freshmen from the outside community come into the dorms." Last year, in fact, several arrests were made by the Patrol in such situations.

As equally dangerous situations, at least for students, he added, is the purchase, off-campus, of a large quantity of drugs for redistribution within MIT. Such a purchase, Olivieri explained, can leave a trail that will lead Cambridge officers to MIT. (A similar danger exists when people from outside MIT come on-campus to buy drugs.)

With MIT students, Olivieri said, the Patrol's policy is "to avoid "repressive measures" in favor of educational programs aimed at making people aware of things that might endanger others.

Technical Notes

* There will be a meeting of the association for Women Students, once Monday January 22 from 4-6

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* There will be a meeting of the Aeronautics Board, Civil Aeronautics Board abolished Youth Fares. Please cut out and mail the letter below to: Congress know where we stand and the proper legislation is in order to correct this injustice now!

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