

# Pills-a-go-go

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## Pills Pound Parasites!

GD Searle scientists have come up with a cheap pill to fight off a parasitic infection called cutaneous leishmaniasis. The pill, allopurinol, is twice as effective as the regular, slow-injection of antimony. The dread ailment is transmitted by the bite of sand fleas and is common in tropical countries. Allopurinol is sold in the US as Lopurin by Boots Pharmaceuticals Inc and Zyloprim by Burroughs Wellcome Co. as treatment for gout and kidney stones

## Felonious Farms

The FDA is threatening a Taylorville, IL veterinarian with up to 55 years in prison and millions of dollars in fines for illegally importing unapproved animal drugs. Dr. Irving Ross, 70, was nailed in an ongoing "sting" operation to extend the war on drugs to the animal world. The old doctor has been tending farm animals and pets since 1949 and is the author of two textbooks on animal medicine.

## "Has he got the secret formula?!"

Indianapolis cops are searching for missing Lilly chemist, 29-year-old Mark E. Tomich who failed to show up to work even though he was known as a punctual and hard-working man. Cops found his locked 1990 BMW in the company parking lot and noted that Tom had withdrawn a "sizeable" chunk of money from his company savings account a month earlier.

## Let them chew bark

Rep. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., pounded the podium before three house subcommittees about the waste of Pacific yew tree bark used to produce the anti-cancer drug, Taxol. "We've got people all over this country waiting in line, waiting for a chance to be a part of trials with this lifesaving drug," he said. Taxol is thought to be especially effective in fighting ovarian cancer as well as lung and breast cancers. Bristol-Myers Squibb, said the company will have enough taxol on hand when the drug receives FDA approval to market taxol for ovarian cancer patients who have not responded to other therapies. It takes the bark of three 100-year-old yew trees to produce enough taxol for one person. The search is on for a synthetic.

## Tylenol Desperados

HAMILTON, Ohio -- Two teenage girls were suspended from Wilson Junior High School school for five days because one gave two Tylenol capsules to her classmate who had a headache. School mucky-mucks

## Pills a poppin'

By Chet Antonini, editor and publisher

Wow, man, the mutants in congress are going to have to do without their free pills from the House Pharmacy. And the Japanese have dragged out AIDS as the latest reason to suppress birth control pills there (people might stop using condoms they say ... horrors!).

But what's really a scandal is the fact that try as I might I cannot track down what the "several prescription and non-prescription drugs" were that Sally Jesse Raphael's kid took. Believe me, I've tried to find out but even my snoop colleagues at the tabloids don't know. PaGG continues the investigation.

In March President Bush revealed part of his plan to save the economy, counting on the \$4 billion genetic-engineering industry to grow to \$50 billion by the end of the decade "if we let it." It is this area of industry Bush hopes to aid by "streamlining" approval procedures for biotech products — in both drugs and agriculture. This suggestion comes directly from Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, headed up by Dan Quayle.

Ralph Nader's Public Citizen has already charged that Dan's Council is little more than a payoff for large contributors to the Republican party and they back up their claims with impressive paper trails. One of the larger contributors to republicans is Eli Lilly.

You know Lilly, the company that provided George Bush with his first and only job between being CIA chief and Vice President. Bush was on their board of directors, though NOBODY talks about it. Bush never lived in Indiana and has no special business or pharmaceutical expertise. In fact, his only other connection to Indiana is Dan Quayle.

You know Quayle ... the one whose family owns a large chunk of Lilly stock, the one whose uncle ran Lilly's PR department while Bush "worked" there.

The truth is, there appears to be no more



delay getting biotech drugs through the FDA than other pharmaceuticals. Lilly, of course, is heavily into agricultural products of all kinds including genetically engineered plants, fertilizers and pesticides. In fact, agrochemicals make up a large percentage of Lilly's business. Lilly also makes some of the world's top-selling biotech drugs and is doing some of the most vigorous and advanced research in this field.

In the same speech, Bush also said something about being able to compete with Japan. You know Japan ...

Now, pharmaceutical research is one of the few areas the Japanese aren't beating the shit out of us. But they easily could since they're such smart fellers and since THEIR drug approval process is so much less stringent than ours. We could take a tip from them. In fact, one of the streamlining proposals would be to start accepting Japanese test data when certifying drugs for use in the U.S.

Good thing for Lilly. In February the company transferred their entire Qualicaps capsule manufacturing operation (with facilities in the U.S., Japan, England, France, Spain, and Mexico) to their Japanese partner of 25 years, Shionogi & Co. Ltd. In return, Lilly gets full Japanese marketing rights for its biotech drug, Humulin plus a bunch of cash.

"This decision is in keeping with our long-term strategy to focus our resources ... on the discovery and development of beneficial new products through our life-sciences-based research programs," explained Lilly president and CEO, Vaughn D. Bryson.

Now that we've solved that little mystery let's figure out why the FDA is trying turn vitamins into prescription drugs.

**NEWS FLASH!** The FDA has declared all shipments from certain overseas suppliers of "smart drugs" illegal. Customs now refuses entry to all orders, whether you've got a prescription or not. The latest SMART DRUG NEWS suggests ways to beat this obstacle. SDR is \$40/yr, POB 4029, Menlo Park, CA 94026. Also the FDA has now suddenly and completely banned the cough syrup Terpin Hydrate because they felt it was being abused.

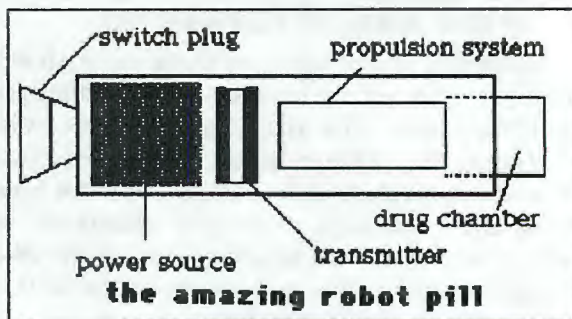
Here are some top-selling genetically engineered drugs, the companies that make them:

- ACTIVASE, Genentech (owned by Lilly): acute myocardial infarction.
- ENGERIX-B, SmithKline Beecham: hepatitis B.
- HUMATROPE, Eli Lilly: human growth hormone deficiency in children.
- HUMULIN, Eli Lilly: diabetes.
- INTRON A, Schering-Plough: hairy cell leukemia, AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma.

## Pills of the Future

Scientists have long recognized the beauty of pill-form medicine and thus have never stopped trying to adapt this eminently convenient dosage form to every type of medicine. Indeed, anything a person could ingest has is a potential candidate for pillification.

Now high technology has made possible the introduction of mechanical "Smart Pills" that travel the human



body like mini-submarines before discharging medicine at a specific place.

Dr. Jerome Schentag of New York State University in Buffalo, NY has developed a polycarbonate coated pill less than one inch long that contains a tiny radio transmitter, power source and propulsion system along with a drug chamber that can withstand the rigors of normal digestion all the way through the human body. A tiny computer and antenna worn in the patient's vest tracks the pill's progress and when it reaches the site, tells the pill to release the medication. Then you just poo out the spent pill.

"It can take chemotherapy right down to the site of a tumor or disease in the bowel and drop it right on top of it — just like a toxic bullet!" says Schentag.

Another pill design breakthrough comes from a team of researchers at Duke University headed up by Dr. Kinam Park — the amazing expanding pill.

After being swallowed the pill grows to ten times its original size and stays in the stomach for as long as a week, releasing medication before the hydrogel coating finally gets digested.

So far the pill has only been tested on dogs since it's still way too big to be comfortably swallowed by people. Right now the prototype is a bit larger than the size of a large fiber pill.

"We want the new pill to be something that can be easily taken by children and the elderly," says Park. "We want to get it down to where it's just a little larger than a standard aspirin pill."



## MUTANT MASCOT: THE OBNOXIOUS STORY OF SPEEDY ALKA-SELTZER

The world's most insipid drug mascot — Speedy Alka-Seltzer was developed to improve the pill's image after it got its ass kicked by the FTC. For decades Miles Labs had claimed that drinking Alka-Seltzer would equalize "systemic acidity" and thus cure a host of problems from rheumatism to domestic disputes.

A sample ad from the 1930's:

"They've had a terrible fight. He snapped at her and left ... It's all lovely now ... what caused it? Too much acidity in the body... Be Wise — Alkalize with Alka-Seltzer!"

By the end of WWII the company was forced to abandon this method of hawking the fizzy pills and Miles admen wanted a sort of ambassador for Alka-Seltzer they originally envisioned as "Mr. Alka-Seltzer". What they came up with was a twisted, red-headed "sprite" who wore a giant Alka-Seltzer on his head and whose body was, in fact, just a giant Alka-Seltzer. In one hand (at the end of an absurdly long arm) he held a magic wand with which he cured stomach problems. His original name was "Sparky" but a sales manager thought "Speedy" would be better.

At first Speedy appeared mostly in doctors' magazines then the hideous mutant mascot got on the radio and became famous among the general population. Miles sponsored a nationwide talent search for a suitable voice and found it in a prepubescent Richard Beals.

In 1954

Speedy got on the tube, too, and appeared in about 100 different commercials throughout the 50's and early 60's. The bastard was even a hit in Latin America where he was known as "Prontito".

Although Speedy was mercifully killed off by Consumer Products Group head Bob Wallace, ("Speedy may have somewhat overstayed his time", he said) the half-pill, half-boy was resurrected for the 1976 Bicentennial commercialism. He was also scheduled for a comeback during the 1980 Olympics, but those ads were pulled when President Carter cancelled U.S. participation in the games.



## Somnolent Culture

By Sylvia Remora

The world of pills has its own special prejudices that reflect larger truths about Western culture and the society we live in. One of the most blatant and instructive of these prejudices is the widespread fear and contempt that doctors, patients and people in general show toward stimulants.

Except for caffeine and nicotine, most stimulants are reviled and hated. Cocaine has become the target of the war on drugs. Meth labs are treated like nuclear waste dumps and the meth chemists are hunted down like diseased animals and thrown into prison for ridiculously long sentences. The doctors who used to make a living prescribing diet pills to bored housewives have gone the way of \$15 ounces of marijuana. In contrast, the use of depressants is widely encouraged. The acceptance of alcohol is the most common example of this bias toward drugs that depress body function and mental perception. Doctors frequently prescribe tranquilizers, sedatives and sleeping pills to their troubled patients. Depressants even pop up in our daily conversation; it's common to hear harried co-workers advise each other to "take a Valium" when stress surfaces. Many times the people using this cliché have never taken a Valium in their lives.

Why do we fear stimulants? Anyone who is normally hyperactive or who indulges in stimulants knows the answer intuitively. People are more comfortable with placid sluggards. To be wide awake is to think, to do, to bounce off the walls and explode in marathon conversations that lead to introspection, prank phone calls, plots and serious societal espionage. To be awake, alert and wired is, in a word, dangerous. The powers that be would rather we all drown our sorrows in booze in front of the television. It keeps us pliant and manageable. It makes us better consumers. Just try to watch TV on speed. By the fifth commercial you'll be ranting against Madison Avenue and you sure as hell won't be ready to go out and buy the crap you see featured in their sluggish, banal advertisements. Living on stimulants makes you realize just how slow everyone else is moving. No wonder none of this shit ever changes.

What would happen if all the people who stagger home from their dreary jobs each day stopped dulling their pain with an alcohol or pot-induced stupor each night? What if they popped speed and drank espresso instead? We may never know...



said the girls should be glad they were treated so lightly, they could have been expelled.

The school says its policy is for the students' own protection. Youngsters, after all, could bring illicit drugs to class in containers once used to hold medications, and teachers wouldn't know the difference.

Students may take non-prescription medication, but must first get school officials' approval and must take the medication in the presence of an adult.

### Tickets to the policeman's ball?

Ciba-Geigy has agreed to spend \$63.8 million to settle criminal charges that it illegally disposed of hazardous waste at its Toms River chemical plant.

The company promised to spend \$50 million for cleaning up the site and to pump and purify 500,000 gallons of groundwater daily to prevent contamination from spreading. Ciba-Geigy will also pay \$9 million in fines and civil penalties, reimburse the state for \$2.35 million in legal and administrative costs, and "donate" \$2.5 million to the state for environmental purposes.

### Flipper reruns get big ratings

Thalidomide can help treat one of the worst forms of the skin disease lupus, French medical researchers reported in *The Lancet* medical journal. Lupus, is a degenerative disease that affects skin, joints, heart, kidney, brain and eyes. Test subjects showed substantial improvement after treatment with thalidomide, especially of the skin and joints. Patients with systemic lupus were also helped by the drug.

The pill has also been shown effective in preventing rejection of bone marrow transplants in cancer patients and in treating leprosy.

### More Generic Crime

NEW YORK - Two former officials of Pharmaceutical Resources, a generic drug manufacturer, settled insider trading charges with the SEC by agreeing to pay a total of more than \$2.2 million, which represents their alleged ill-gotten trading benefits along with interest and penalties. The charges related to secret gratuities former Pharmaceutical Resources executives Ashok Patel and Dilip Shah allegedly paid to FDA chemists who reviewed the company's drug applications.

### Preparation H Crackdown

Big brother needs to keep a closer eye on over-the-counter drugs says a General Accounting Office report requested by Rep. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., chairman of the House small Business subcommittee on regulation. Wyden then fired off a letter to FDA Chairman David "The Boob" Kessler saying the FDA needs to have more authority to inspect records of OTC drug manufacturers and to count how many of what gets sold where. In addition he said there needs to be more "post-marketing surveillance" to determine if anyone is growing antlers because of Sinutab — or getting drunk on mouthwash.

U.S. consumers spent \$11.2 billion, on OTC junk in 1990 — not even 2 percent of all health care expenditures.

### Oldsters, Youngsters Face Off

Consumer Product Safety Commission has decided to use real-live old people to test new designs in child-proof containers since finding out that a goodly portion of poisonings come from bottles

left open by elderly folks who hated the hard to open tops.

### The Kindly Pharmacist

The American Pharmaceutical Association says double-checking prescriptions and briefing patients is commonplace for pharmacists.

Eighty-nine percent of the 200 pharmacists polled last October said they offered advice to their customers at least 15 times a day and 72 percent said they were the ones who initiated the contact rather than waiting for the customers to approach them. The majority of the druggists polled said they filled an average of 148 prescriptions a day.

### European pill laws

Look out for pill problems in the new "United States of Europe"! Prices vary widely among the EC countries thanks to widely differing social security systems. Add to that the idea that a "euro-brand" for the whole continent would have to have a label in nine languages. In addition, the 12 countries all have different ideas about what should be over the counter and what should be by prescription only.

"With open borders it's going to be difficult to say something is available by prescription in one country, not in another," said Armin Kessler of Switzerland's Hoffman-La Roche.

No word yet on differing brand names for the same pill.

### Pot News

Germany's supreme court is going to decide if it's constitutional to ban marijuana and hashish. A lower court in Lübeck has already ruled that to punish the use of cannabis, etc. and not to punish the consumption of alcohol and nicotine violates the constitution's principle of equality. In the U.S. the government has decided that no more people will be allowed to use marijuana as part of their medical treatment. Like this is a big deal. Only 13 people in the country have got the permission to use state-grown dope anyway. Besides, THC is already available in the prescription pill, Marinol, made by Roxane ... the same folks who make Milk of Magnesia!

### Halcion Hell, drug-crazed pilots

Singapore drove further into the brave new world order by making illegal possession of Halcion punishable with 2-20 years in the slammer and 2-15 "strokes of the cane".

Burt Reynolds revealed to TV guide that he was addicted to Halcion, taking as many as 50 of the pills per day to "control pain".

And the US Air Force admitted not only that its pilots used Dexamprone to keep them alert while bombing Iraq but were also given temazepam to help them come down when they returned.

### Mickey Finn makes a comeback

Dickhead Senator Brock Adams (WA) seems to have used an old standby to help him molest shapely young female assistants. So far three women have said they were knocked out by a "pink liquid" Adams gave them shortly before feeling them up. Experts theorize chloral hydrate is the drug Adams used, especially since the "incidents" were said to have occurred right when Bristol-Myers Squibb was selling a chloral hydrate product called Noctec — a pink liquid.