Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I wish to congratulate the *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* for publishing John Wallace's brilliant article "Controlled Drinking, Treatment Effectiveness, and the Disease Model of Addiction: A Commentary on the Ideological Wishes of Stanton Peele" in Volume 22, Number 3, July-September 1990. Wallace's detailed examination and exposure of Peele's shoddy scholarship is truly an impressive research accomplishment.

It is astonishing how Peele has been able to publish articles that are lacking in scholarship in professional publications. Equally astonishing and dismaying is the lack of scholarship on the part of the reviewers. How is it that the numerous errors, erroneous inferences, and half-truths that are characteristic of Peele's writings manage to slip by editors and referees?

There is, however, one criticism I have of Wallace's article. On page 270, in the first paragraph below Table I, it states, "But despite optimistic reports by the Sobells—and subsequently by Caddy, Addington and Perkins *as well as Pendery, Maltzman and West (1982)* — further independent follow-up of these patients could not confirm the findings by either the Sobells or Caddy, Addington and Perkins" [emphasis added]. While it is correct that "further independent follow-up of these patients could not confirm the findings by either the Sobells or Caddy, Addington and Perkins," the italicized phrase is misleading because it appears to be misplaced. Consequently, it is incorrect and contrary to the second half of the sentence. I believe that the latter part of this sentence should indicate that "Pendery, Maltzman and West (1982) could not confirm the findings of the Sobells and of Caddy, Addington and Perkins."

Furthermore, I have offered explicit reasons why their results could not be confirmed (Maltzman 1989a, 1989b). Some of the difficulties encountered in attempting to present these reasons and the analyses on which they are based have been described by McDonald (1989).

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To the Editor:

We read with interest the recent letter from Myron J. Stolaroff (1990) in which he discussed the central nervous system (CNS) activity of two new psychoactive compounds, 2C-T-2 and 2C-T-7. These compounds are representative of a modest family of CNS-active, sulfur-containing phenethylamines.

This group contains a number of other examples that might be of interest to researchers and clinicians. All of these compounds can be classified as 2,5-dimethoxy-4-(alkylthio)phenethylamines. Members of this family that have proved to be active in humans, as determined by our procedure for the evaluation of potentially psychoactive compounds (Shulgin, Shulgin & Jacob 1986), are listed below.

Code Name	Alkyl Group Attached to Sulfur	Oral Dose Range
2C-T	methyl	60-100 mg
2C-T-2	ethyl	12-25 mg
2C-T-4	isopropyl	8-20 mg
2C-T-7	propyl	10-30 mg
2C-T-8	cyclopropylmethyl	30-50 mg
2C-T-9	tertiary butyl	60-100 mg
2C-T-13	2-methoxyethyl	25-40 mg
2C-T-15	cyclopropyl	>30 mg
2C-T-17	secondary butyl	60-100 mg
2C-T-21	2-fluoroethyl	8-12 mg

The oral dose ranges represent the amounts of the amine hydrochloride that were required to evoke a consistent CNS response. The qualitative nature of the effects are quite varied, ranging from introspection to facilitation of communication.

These compounds were prepared by the modification of previously reported procedures (Jacob et al. 1977). The experimental details, the spectral and analytical properties, and the qualitative differences will be published separately.

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To the Editor:

The report of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) was issued in 1989 under the title *First, Get the Casual User*. It has been widely quoted in the international media, referring to its content and chiefly to its practical consequences within the antidrug strategy of the United States government.

The basic philosophy of the document can be summed up as follows: (1) drug use is spread by users themselves, rather than by professional drug dealers; (2) among the drug-using population, addicts are not an attractive model because of their problems; and (3) the casual (nonaddicted) users who have little or no problems are more attractive.

Therefore, the repression must be concentrated on casual users, and in order to deter casual drug use there is an urgent need for more repressive structures — from prisons to judges to policemen — and more alternative sanctions meted out by the criminal justice system.

The original text of the ONDCP report puts forward arguments that deserve critical comments from the antiprohibitionist point of view. According to the report, the user who is drug dependent is different in that "the non-addicted casual or regular user . . . is likely to have a still intact family, social and work life. He is likely still to 'enjoy' his drug for the pleasure it offers. And he is thus much more willing and able to proselytize his drug use — by action or example — among his remaining non-user peers, friends and acquaintances. A non-addict's drug use, in other words, is highly contagious. And casual or regular use — whether ongoing or brand new — may always lead to addiction: again, we have no accurate way to predict the actual trajectory." In other words, the report admits that nondependent drug use is compatible with an absolutely normal life-style. In fact, this is quite contradictory within the theoretical premises of the traditional prohibitionist outlook. According to these premises, the so-called narcotic drugs have an intrinsic pathologic quality that differentiates them from the legal psychoactive substances: people are supposed to be unable to use them in a controlled way and are therefore bound to an inevitable outcome of physical and social disruption.

Furthermore, the report acknowledges that "nonaddicted users still comprise the vast bulk of our drug-involved population. There are *many millions* of them [emphasis added]." This means that what the prohibitionists have always denied is true: that for the illegal as well as the legal drugs, abusers are a minority of the total drug-using population. If ONDCP would share the typical prohibitionist assumption, according to which casual use is only a transient phase toward the onset of drug dependence, the repression of nonaddicted users could find a sound motivation in the scope of letting them escape a fate of drug addiction. However, this hypothesis is not even mentioned in the ONDCP report. In fact, the possible onset of drug dependence is worded only in the vague and contradictory statement that "casual or regular use . . . may always lead to addiction," but that it is impossible "to predict its eventual trajectory."

Why, then, does ONDCP propose to build up a huge and costly repressive structure to punish a behavior that is admittedly compatible with a normal life-style and is shared by many millions of American citizens? An answer is possible only when one considers the evolution of the cultural approach to the drug abuse problem, where an issue of medical and social safety has been reconceptualized as a moral issue.

Although influenced by subjective cultural values and by fallacious interpretations, the theoretical premises of traditional prohibitionists were connected with reality or what reality seemed to be. For example, cannabis was made illegal because it was *believed* that it could make people become crazy or criminals (National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse 1972). These premises have been substituted by an approach where phenomena are not considered to be experimentally evaluative, but they are accepted or condemned according to their conformity to the underlying ideology.

Typical of this approach is a 1987 publication of the United Nations that recommended banning the terms "responsible drug use" and "recreational drug use." In fact, the numerous people that use drugs without problems contradict the equation that drug use equals pathology, which is crucial to the entire prohibitionist outlook. However, given that the phenomenon can hardly be factually disproved, it is simply *deleted from the vocabulary*, an attitude that reminds one of the times when the name of the Evil One should not be uttered. Unfortunately, the equation