

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Is it drug-dealing or another startup?

AFTER his third startup failed, Carl worried that he could no longer afford to live in Palo Alto, the town where he grew up.

As a teenager, Carl had burgled a few houses, the nice ones that his rich friends lived in. With a teenage partner, he'd stolen televisions, VCRs, computers and jewelry. But the two boys had stopped after a few escapades, because Palo Alto was a small town, and they feared getting caught.

Now, facing unemployment, Carl wondered if he should give home burglary another try. He had been good at it. He crunched a few of the numbers, and realized quickly that it wouldn't pay enough. That was a kid's game.

Reflecting on his most recent failed start-up, Carl wondered if he had taken smart drugs, would he have done better in his career.

This is part 21 of a 24-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

He'd read a story recently in London's Guardian newspaper on how the British students were complaining that American exchange students taking smart drugs were putting the European students at an academic disadvantage.

Carl wondered if the current generation of Americans on smart drugs was an evolutionary modification of the human species. If so, was this a good thing, or were they just drug-addicted freaks?

He recalled the times in college that

he had pulled all-nighters and taken speed. He'd liked that, and done well on tests and exams when he took speed to study for them.

He wondered about the longitudinal studies over time of students taking these drugs.



CARL

intuition told him.

He wondered if his doc would give him smart drugs. Fifty percent of students currently at prestigious American colleges, he had been told, were now taking smart drugs.

What were the long-term effects? Were the studies complete? Were they massaged? You couldn't take speed indefinitely without negative effects, his

Carl wondered if he could buy them online, under the table, from Asia or Canada.

If so, how could he be sure he was getting the real thing, and not a fake?

That might be a good business, Carl thought — one that listed under-the-counter smart drugs from abroad, and rated whether they were honest sites or fake sites. Maybe he could make money off of a site like that.

He sat down with his spreadsheet, and began to crunch a few numbers. Such a business was something he might put together himself, he reflected, without a lot of startup capital.

Carl began to get excited. His old entrepreneurial enthusiasm returned.

More tomorrow.