



Partly Cloudy
Partly cloudy, with
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Lows near 76. Highs in
low 90s. SE winds 8-15
m.p.h. Data, Page 2-A.

St. Petersburg Times

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One Drug Overdose Spurs New Laws

St. Petersburg Times, Monday, June 4, 1973

3-B

By KEN GEFFERT

TALLAHASSEE — "You're a politician, call somebody." Doris Baumgartner pleaded to her husband when their 15-year-old son came home overdosed on drugs.

State Rep. George Baumgartner made the call and as a result his son is back in school making As and Florida has two new laws to help thousands of other young drug users.

"We were furious, crushed and confused," said Baumgartner, D-Miami, recalling the day last July when his son Pat admitted taking an overdose of methaqualone, an hypnotic sedative.

AFTER RUSHING Pat to the hospital to have his stomach pumped, Baumgartner

telephoned a friend who advised that Pat be taken to "The Seed," a South Florida drug-treatment center.

For the next 42 days Pat lived in a foster home and his only communication with his parents was two nights a week when all 800 patients at the Seed assembled in a huge warehouse.

Pat stepped to a microphone and told an audience of 1,500 parents: "My name is Pat. I'm 15 years old. I've done everything from pot to heroin for three and a half years."

It was the first time George and Doris Baumgartner had heard the whole truth. "It was enough to knock you out of your chair. There was total disbelief, guilt, shame and a lot of tears," said Baumgart-

"You . . . begin to understand you're not the only one who has problems. It's how you cope with them that makes the difference."
—Rep. Baumgartner

ner.
"BUT AFTER about two weeks you get past that stage and begin to understand you're not the only one who has problems. It's how you cope with them that makes the difference."

Baumgartner, 44, was then in the middle of his campaign for a third term in the Florida House of Representatives. He had to reduce his campaign schedule because of the twice-weekly parents' nights

at the Seed, but won reelection anyway.

"If it could happen to me, it could happen to anybody," said Baumgartner, a \$50,000-a-year contractor. "Friends who thought they had a good family unit too, were having the same problems. I felt I could do something about it as a legislator."

Baumgartner introduced two bills in the 1973 legislative session. One appropriated \$400,000 in state funds to help

sustain licensed drug-treatment centers like the Seed.

THE OTHER modified a 1972 law that required school boards to expel any student charged or convicted of a drug crime. Baumgartner's bill gave local educators the option of readmitting the pupil if he completed treatment in a licensed drug-rehabilitation center.

Both bills passed the Legislature last week.

Baumgartner estimates that the state funds will help 5,700 youthful drug addicts try to kick the habit. He conceded that the second new law may place even greater demands on the 50 licensed drug-treatment centers in Florida, which were overloaded last year with almost 100,000 pa-

tients.

Next year he plans to reintroduce a bill killed this session, which would have required \$1 of each court fine paid in Florida to be funneled into a fund to assist drug-treatment centers.

"WE NEED more money for treatment and less for research," said Baumgartner. "We're losing too many persons along the way. Hardly a day goes by in Dade County (Miami) when a kid doesn't die of a drug overdose."

As for Pat, Baumgartner beams at the two As and two Bs on his son's last report card from North Miami Beach senior high. He's still a teenager with certain growing problems but now we discuss instead of argue."

"My name is Pat. I'm 15 years old. I've done everything from pot to heroin for three and a half years."



REP. BAUMGARTNER . . . happened to him.