

Alaska's pot law has caused problems, officials say

By Gary Henley
Of the Emerald

Officials in Alaska say its law permitting adults to possess small amounts of marijuana for use on private property has added to that state's drug problem.

Oregonians will decide Ballot Measure 5 on Tuesday, which would allow adults to cultivate marijuana for personal use.

Alaska's Supreme Court decided that individuals' right to privacy exceeds the state's interest in prosecuting possession

of small amounts of marijuana in *Ravin vs. State* in 1975.

The court determined that according to Alaska's constitution, privacy in the home is a fundamental right.

In addition, the court determined that the right to privacy in the home must yield only "when it interferes in a serious manner with the health, safety, rights and privileges of others or with the public welfare."

In 1982, the Alaska Legislature followed up on the

court's decision and defined a "small amount" of marijuana as four ounces or less. "Personal use" was defined as occurring on private property only. Intent to sell, sale to a minor and purchase of any amount are still prohibited. Possession of any amount is currently considered illegal under federal law.

The Oregon measure does not define the maximum amount a person can possess and does not say where marijuana can be used.

Herb Soll, director of criminal prosecution in Alaska, said there is a misunderstanding of Alaska's statute, both in Alaska and Oregon.

"The first thing that we'd want to reiterate is that marijuana is not legal here," he said. "It may give the customer a little more security, but the law doesn't really give them any more of a break," he said.

"If anything more comes forward, we're going to have to come out with a statement against it," Soll said.

The Oregon initiative has too many loopholes, Soll said. While Soll doesn't like Alaska's court and legislative decisions, "at least it's specific," he said.

Soll isn't aware of any studies showing increased use of marijuana or increased criminal activity as a result of the current law, and his department hasn't been able to conduct its own, he said. "What resources we have are so involved in stopping cocaine and heroin," he added.

However, Soll believes activity has increased. "We've certainly had our share of people coming up here. For the most part it's publicity," he said.

"While there may be some mature adults who can deal with these things, there's certainly a problem with motiva-



Graphic by Lorraine Rath

tion in children," Soll said.

Despite continued complaints from police and others, recent efforts to recriminalize marijuana in Alaska have gathered little attention, said Alaska state Sen. Jan Faiks.

But she still thinks the majority of Alaskans support recriminalization of marijuana, she said.

"There's no way to enforce it. The police are complaining to the Legislature that they can't do anything," she said.

"I'm an anti-drug person to begin with, and it's really causing a problem with the kids. The marijuana law has increased the hard drug use, especially among juveniles," she said.

"Juvenile delinquency has gone up, and Alaska has the highest percentage of runaways. We feel all this has been because of the drug use," Faiks said. She added that marijuana use in Alaska is four times the national average.

Laurels

Inge McNeese, a University graduate student in public policy, planning and management, has been named a recipient of the Congressional Fellowship on Women and Public Policy. McNeese is currently on legislative assignment at the nation's Capitol working in the office of Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo.

University student Carl Kaye has been selected to participate in the International Trade Intern Program conducted by the International Trade and Commerce Institute of Portland State University fall term. Kaye is one of 13 candidates chosen from universities and colleges throughout Oregon.

John Edginton, head of the University Department of

Leisure Studies and Services, has been elected to the 53-member national Academy of Leisure Sciences.

University faculty members Michael Ellis and Dennis Howard are academy members also.

The University has announced its new and continuing Deans' Scholars. The scholars are chosen for consistently distinguished records of academic performance throughout the 1985-86 school year and consists of the top 5 percent of eligible undergraduates in each of the six fully participating schools or colleges.

Those continuing Deans' Scholars include Mary Bottge, Rose Connert, Marijo Lunsford-

Taylor, Dee Kilgore, Cheryl Fellows, Jennifer Labunetz, Lyndelle Light and Valerie Tolbert.

Also included are Blake Hodgetts, Scott Drumm, Linda Meador, Monty Hindman, Krista Laursen, Jeffrey Parsons, Ellen Cross, Lori Lott, Stephanie Lewis, and Linda Prosser.

Julie Chapman-Ellis, Mark Bauman, Julie Warwick, Lisa Johnson, Kristin Moody, Ellen Meade, Joseph Renaud, and John Ragner were chosen also as Deans' Scholars.

All the Deans' Scholars completed 15 or more credits a term, with at least 12 of the credits graded. In addition, all maintained a 3.75 grade point average or higher.

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