

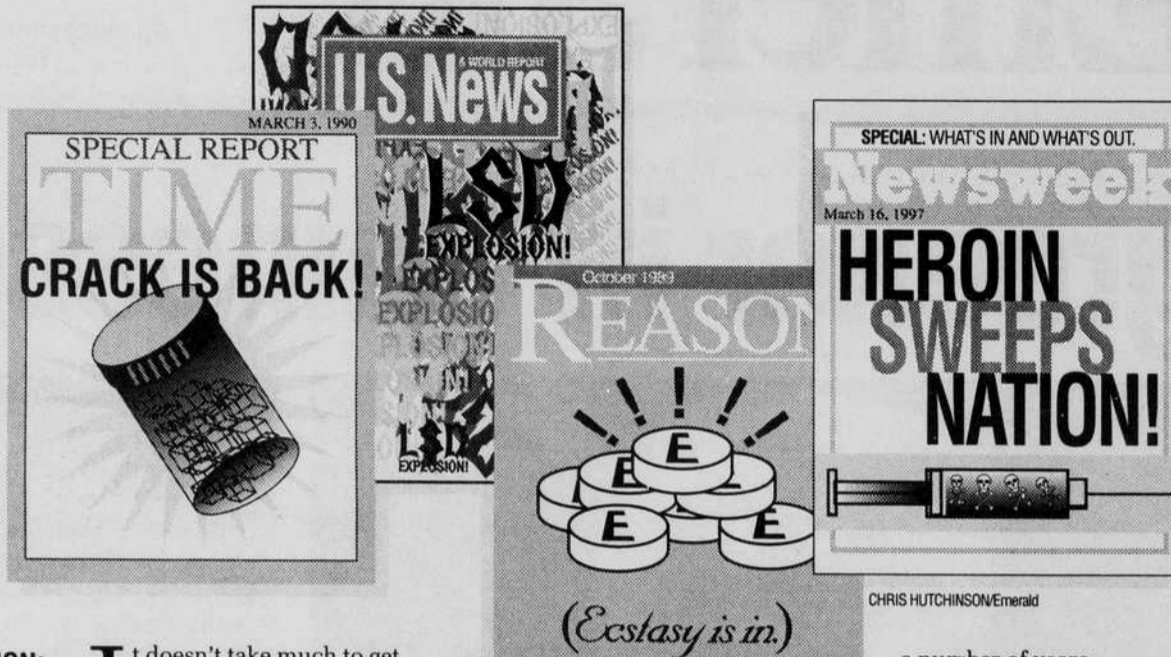
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# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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## The Ins and Outs of Drugs



**OUR OPINION:**  
Reports that drug abuse is increasing among college students fail to show the overall trends in drug use for young people

It doesn't take much to get people worried about teenage drug use. A new survey reporting drug arrests on college campuses are on the rise has people once again fearful that today's scholars will be tomorrow's junkies. While the increase in arrests doesn't necessarily mean an increase in drug use, the news further justified the idea that drug use is reaching epidemic levels among young people.

It's hard to ignore the devastating effects drugs can have on young people, but in many ways, the hysteria over drug use at college campuses has been sensationalized. Even though drugs are a problem for many young people, to see this as a new problem is to misunderstand the problem itself.

Drug use at college campuses, and elsewhere for that matter, is cyclical. A drug hits the streets, becomes popular, gets abused until people see the problems it causes firsthand and then fades out of popularity. And much like fashion

trends, drugs that have gone out of style often come back into popularity once people have forgotten the dangers associated with them.

For instance, marijuana rose in popularity in the '60s only to all but disappear in the '70s. Now, in the late '80s and '90s, reports show marijuana use is on the rise again. Similarly, heroin, speed and ecstasy have all returned to popularity at certain times after disappearing from the public spotlight.

The problem isn't that drug use is increasing over time. In fact, most numbers confirm that drug use among the youth has remained fairly constant over the years. When statistics show heroin use is increasing among a certain sector of the population, they usually fail to mention that before heroin use was on the rise, it had declined for

a number of years.

The real problem with drugs in our culture is not increasing abuse — it's forgetfulness. The lessons learned from abusing a drug are too quickly forgotten as a new generation of users must relearn the painful lessons their elders already discovered.

The media also often forget that drug abuse among the young is nothing new. By only focusing on when use of a particular drug increases and failing to mention that overall drug use hasn't increased significantly over the years, a false picture of the drug problem is painted.

Instead of focusing on what's going on with drug use now, we should look at what has happened with drug use throughout the past. By looking at the big picture, maybe we can finally learn from our mistakes and move on to a more sober future.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*

### LETTERS

#### Drug denial

The state of arrogance complicated with ignorance and fortified with blind bias seems Mr. Joe Renaud's (ODE, March 4) mental crutch, as well as "sixties denial."

He states that "the LSD experience can be quite pleasant and spiritually beneficial." What a bunch of "sixties mentality" crap.

Renaud may use street drugs and think he's reaching Nirvana, but with any mind altering chemical, perception is drug-effected. So please call a spade a spade.

Renaud also states that the police officer "offers no evidence" that there is a problem on campus. Well, guess what happens when you mix stressed out immature students with any mind altering drug? There is a problem.

One only has to read the Emerald campus crime report. Three-quarters of the complaints and/or arrests are alcohol- and other drug-related.

A drug-induced mind believes it has freedom of choice when it abuses any drug. Like acid over meth; alcohol over pot. Actually, that's called denial. Anyone who uses an illegal

drug is considered to be an abuser... at least. If one is under the legal drinking age, they are a drug abuser if they are drinking.

Their denial dictates that the drug they are using is okay because their drug is not as bad as nicotine... or whatever. Or even how a drug is ingested (i.e. snorting is okay over injecting).

The next time Mr. Renaud decides to use LSD, may I suggest administering it as a suppository.

Colin Campbell  
Counseling Services

#### Lend a hand

The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness (NCAHH) is planning a state-wide Hunger Cleanup on April 12. The event is sponsored by OSPIRG and endorsed by president Dave Frohnmayer, several members of the city council, our local State Representatives and many others.

We are working to build a strong coalition to address the problem of hunger and homelessness. In addition,

we encourage Emerald readers to take a few hours this month to make a difference by participating in the Hunger Cleanup.

On April 12, we will go to sites such as Food and Lane County, Lane Shelter Care and Saint Vincent DePaul to do community service. You can care and share by making donations or offering part of your time. Donations are given to local, national and international hunger relief agencies.

Just a little contribution from you makes a great difference in someone's life. Don't you want to lend a hand? I'm sure you do.

Therefore, come by the OSPIRG office in Suite 1 of the EMU or sign up at our information booths, if available, in Hamilton and Carson.

Laynah Tan  
Psychology

#### Tax fairness in Oregon

I was born and raised in Oregon and have lived here all my life. I have never seen such an attack on the people. Public services are getting less

### WINNERS

**Duncan McDonald**  
The dean of the journalism school will be promoted to Vice President of University Public Affairs and Development on May 1.



**University of Arizona**  
The Wildcats underdog men's basketball team won the national title on Monday night.

**Dave Frohnmayer**

The University president will most likely enjoy a \$40,000 raise, thanks to Nike CEO Phil Knight.



**Portland Trailblazers**

The team has won 14 of its last 16 games as of April 1.

### LOSERS

**Cable companies**

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Monday that cable operators must air all local station broadcasts if so asked.

**Navajos**

Navajo families in Arizona face leases, religious permits and other restrictions if they stay on Hopi tribal land.

**Cross supporters**

A U.S. court ruled Monday that the Skinner Butte cross must be removed by June 15, possibly marking the last court decision on the subject.

**The Academy**

The motion picture academy behind the Oscars is hurting after a record-low television viewer turnout at last week's show.

### Letters policy

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be typed, double spaced and include the author's name, signature, and phone number. The identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

Letters must be limited to 250 words or less. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar or style.