

New Mexico governor seeks drug legalization policy

By Matt Kelley
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Drug use would remain steady or decline and crime would be slashed if drugs were legalized, New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson said today as he kicked off a tour of the nation's capital.

Johnson, a Republican, told about a dozen college students that while he believes drugs are "a bad choice" and "a handicap," current federal anti-drug policies are a failure.

"I hate to say it, but the majority of people who use drugs use them responsibly," Johnson told members of Students for a Sensible Drug Policy at George Washington University. "They choose

when to do it. They do them at home. It's not a financial burden."

White House drug policy director Barry McCaffrey and other officials excoriated Johnson last week after he became the first governor to support drug legalization.

"His pro-drug message runs in the face of all the hard work of millions of parents, teachers, health professionals, community leaders, coaches and clergy who are working so hard to stem drug use," McCaffrey said Friday.

Johnson found a friendlier audience in the students.

"Students are experts on drug use," said Kris Lotlikar, a leader of the group. "We're the children

that this war was supposed to protect. But I have yet to talk to any student who came from a drug-free high school. To me, that's a failed policy."

As the students sipped bottled water, Johnson told them of his drug use as a young man and his decision years ago to forego not only drugs but alcohol and even Coca-Cola in favor of training for triathlons.

"I was somebody who smoked marijuana in college. I didn't experiment with marijuana, I smoked it," Johnson said. "I made a bad choice, but even then, it wasn't a choice that I felt should have landed me in jail."

Johnson said he supports legalized drugs with strict taxes and

control on their sales and use. Under a legalization scheme, Johnson said, drugs such as marijuana, heroin and cocaine should not be available to anyone under 21, public drug use should be banned and penalties enhanced for crimes such as driving under the influence.

Current drug policy focuses too heavily on throwing people in jail, while allowing illegal drug cartels to rake in billions of dollars, Johnson said. And current anti-drug education efforts such as the well-known "This is your brain on drugs" advertisements amount to lies, he said.

"You're brought up learning that drugs make you crazy," Johnson said. "Then you do mar-

ijuana for the first time, and it's not so bad. It's kind of cool. That's when kids find out it's been a lie."

Darren White, who as head of New Mexico's Department of Public Safety oversees the state police, told the students he was not willing to support drug legalization but agreed with Johnson that current anti-drug efforts are misguided.

"We aren't winning the drug war. I can tell you because I'm fighting on the front lines every day," White said. "I call it a skirmish, because that's the kind of resources I'm getting to fight it. ... As a nation, we're not willing to give up the civil liberties necessary to win the drug war."

Drifter tells jurors he deserves death penalty for slaying boy

By Ben Fox
The Associated Press

VISTA, Calif. — A Wisconsin drifter who murdered a third-grade boy in a beach restroom told jurors Monday he would kill again in a minute, he is out to destroy society and he should be executed.

"My whole purpose in life is to help destroy your society," Brandon H. Wilson told the San Diego County Superior Court jury. "You people are here as representatives of that society and as such you should do everything in your power to rid the world of me."

The 21-year old drifter spoke to jurors against the advice of his lawyer as the penalty phase of his

trial got under way.

Matthew Cecchi was killed on Nov. 14, 1998, during a family reunion at Oceanside Harbor.

Wilson admitted he crept up behind the Oroville boy in the restroom, slashed his throat and stabbed him five times in the back. But he claimed he was insane at the time, which meant he couldn't be held liable for the crime under California law.

Jurors rejected that argument last week after deliberating less than six hours, opening the way for the penalty phase. Jurors can recommend death or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Wilson, from St. Croix Falls,

Wis., said he should die.

In a calm, deliberate voice, Wilson said he felt no remorse whatsoever for killing Matthew.

"I would do it again in a second if I had the chance," he said as the boy's mother, Sharon Cecchi, gasped from her front-row courtroom seat.

"Execute me," Wilson concluded.

His statement came after more than two hours of prosecution testimony that included tearful recollections of Matthew by his mother, an uncle and the boy's third-grade teacher.

Two jurors cried as the teacher, Deborah Peck of Oroville's Stan-

ford Avenue School, described how she tried to explain the boy's murder to his classmates.

"Third-graders always ask why and that was a question I had no answer for," said Peck, who called Matthew a straight-A student and an extraordinary little boy.

Jurors heard for the first time the 911 tape of Matthew's uncle, Mark Gerhard, calling for help on a cell phone in the restroom where the boy was attacked.

"It wasn't real. ... It was like a bomb went off," Gerhard said of the moments after the boy was found.

Matthew's mother described her son's life, filling in details missing from the trial that has fo-

cused exclusively on Wilson and his sanity. She said Matthew wanted to be an engineer, cartoonist or architect when he grew up, liked to play baseball and to ride his bike. He wrote stories about aliens.

"He was everything to us," she said.

Prosecutor David Rubin told jurors he hoped the testimony of the boy's family and teacher would persuade them to recommend the ultimate penalty.

"You are going to have a fuller picture to analyze what punishment should fit this crime," Rubin said during his opening statement.

Patch Adams disrobes for disarmament

SAN FRANCISCO — Patch Adams didn't wear a patch — or anything else — during an anti-nuclear protest in which about 50 people marched naked down a busy downtown street.

The ponytailed Adams, who inspired the Robin Williams movie based on his use of humor in treating patients, paraded in chilly weather Sunday as his fellow protesters whooped and chanted "Disrobe for disarmament" and "Nudes, not nukes."

Nonviolent people "really have so few tools to face a capitalist system," Adams told the crowd as they disrobed. "All we really have are ourselves and our ideas. Our ideas have not done the job."

The protesters included Carol Brouillet, 42, of Palo Alto.

"I'm glad my husband's not here," she said. "He wouldn't do this, but we have different world views."

Calendar

Oct 5 Tuesday

The Multicultural Center will hold an open house at 5 p.m. today. The event offers the chance to meet the center's staff members and learn about the resources it offers. It is free and open to the community. The center is located in EMU Room 33. For more information, call the center at 346-4207.

The Lane Memorial Blood Bank is holding a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. today and Wednesday in the EMU Fir Room. Donors should eat a complete meal with protein at least two hours before donating blood.



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