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In my opinion

Hashing out the question of getting HIGH

As various media have said, the Mile High City has finally lived up to its name; the city of Denver has made it legal for any adult, 21 or older, to carry up to an ounce of marijuana. This may be cause of celebration for some, but it would be best to pause before packing up and moving to Colorado: Even though the city says that marijuana possession is okay, the state says otherwise.

That's right, the city law goes against the state law; police will continue to arrest and charge people for marijuana. Many who want to make marijuana legal across the country hope this Denver law will work as a stepping-stone for changing state laws and getting other cities to follow their lead.

There are many people and organizations that are making this argument for the free use of marijuana: The drug is not really harmful, at least not more so than alcohol and tobacco. My knee-jerk reaction to this issue, and more specifically to this argument, is annoyance. I have always believed that smoking pot is a bad thing, which should not be done, just like using any other illegal or harmful substance. I, however, decided that it would be best if I did a little research. There may be some truth to the argument that marijuana is not all that bad, but it has to be taken with a grain of salt when the words are coming from marijuana.com.

In this quest for knowledge, it is best to look at Web sites from both sides of the issue, and, it just so happens, a good portion of the arguments against drug use come from the U.S. government. Though many remain skeptical about our government, and that skepticism is often necessary, there is a level of truth and logic that can be found on government Web sites. There is a level of credibility to an explanation that comes from the Drug Enforcement Administration versus that which comes from a pothead running a Web site from his living room couch (or, better yet, dorm room).

This lack of faith in the words of a pot smoker is furthered when the



JESSICA DERLETH
FREEDOM RINGS WHERE OPINIONS CLASH

arguments are not backed up by hard data, current studies or citations. Thought there may be pro-marijuana sites with good data, they are not easy to find. Many of them, such as cannabisnews.com, have dozens of articles praising the plant. In these articles there are plenty of "facts." The articles refute the negative aspects of marijuana, but they do not cite specific studies or attribute their facts to a single source. There is no credibility to medical facts or statistics if there is no evidence that they come from a reputable source.

Considering the lack of support for the data provided by the pot promoters, it seems best to turn to the Drug Enforcement Administration. On the DEA Web site there is a slew of documented information about marijuana. The most compelling information is that which is linked to a specific study:

The short-term effects of marijuana include: memory loss, distorted perception, trouble thinking and problem-solving, loss of motor skills, decrease in muscle strength, increased heart rate and anxiety.

Smoking five joints a week is equivalent, in terms of cancer-causing chemicals, to smoking a pack of cigarettes every day.

In the hour after smoking marijuana, the risk of heart attack is five times higher than usual.

Smoking marijuana lowers the white-blood-cell count, which weakens the immune system and raises the risk of lung infections.

In the space of about 15 years, the strength of marijuana has increased.

The data is clear, and it is blatantly

obvious that marijuana is a horrible drug. As it is, many Americans smoke marijuana and making it legal would just lead to wider use and abuse.

Some groups, such as Safer Alternative For Enjoyable Recreation, rightly point out that alcohol is the most commonly abused drug in America. SAFER argues that alcohol is also the most dangerous drug, leading to thousands of deaths, car accidents and crimes. Taking that into consideration, marijuana should be made legal because it leads to fewer problems. This argument is absurd; just because alcohol is bad doesn't mean that pot is good. It is true that alcohol can be a devastating drug, but that does not mean that we should start making other drugs accessible because there is the possibility that they will cause less damage. Arguments against alcohol do not further the argument for the legalization of marijuana, they simply work as an argument for prohibition.

If marijuana were legalized, it would become more accessible, thereby making it a larger problem and a larger threat. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 20.6 percent of teenagers (12 to 17 years old) have used marijuana; this number jumps to 53.8 percent for young adults age 18 to 25. If this many young people are already using a dangerous drug, imagine how the number could skyrocket if adults were allowed to legally possess the drug.

As dedicated as some college students may be to the consumption of alcohol and marijuana, they need to be aware of what these substances are doing to their bodies. And with that awareness they need to realize that there are restrictions on these substances for a reason. These dangers need to be presented to college students, teenagers and adults alike. Hopefully these individuals, especially as voters, will realize that the last thing this country needs is to have a dangerous drug legalized.

jderleth@dailyemerald.com

INBOX

President Bush turns journalism dean?

Some journalism deans I know had to cringe when they read the report of George Bush having staff take refresher courses in ethics. That was a clumsy effort at damage control for something the administration has no intention of fostering, especially as one can't "refresh" something that does not exist.

In higher education, we have the perfect resource for those damage control needs: The public relations majors who, in receiving journalism degrees, demonstrate that ethics are as much a joke in journalism education as in the Bush administration.

George Beres
Eugene

Anti-abortionists tired of explaining injustice

In response to Jocelyn Warren, who wrote the letter in regard to an Emerald insert about abortion ("Advertising supplement spreads tired untruths," ODE Nov. 9): You might be correct; we probably should stop all this talk about abortion causing cancer and any number of other horrific diseases. What we need is the straight and honest truth. Abortion is the ending of an

unborn life. Most societies call that murder, and in this case it's completely unjustified — as in what did the unborn child do to deserve it?

I believe that anti-abortionists are just tired of trying to explain that it's wrong, and have started searching for any means possible to try to persuade those that are selfishly choosing murder as a means to prevent pregnancy. Warren jabs at the insert in the Emerald, and refers to it as anti-choice. Not all, but most pregnancies started off as a choice. That being to have sex. One can argue all they want that we shouldn't want parents with children they don't want. Hard to go against that, but that's why there is this program called adoption. As a man I will not try to fight your or any other woman's right to choice, but abortion is not about choice, it's about life.

Shawn D. Garrett
University Senior

U.S. shouldn't compromise citizen, prisoner rights

The core of American values has always been the inalienable rights of Mankind. This philosophy has set us apart and held us as a model for other nations. Since the Geneva Convention, America has exercised its founding philosophy by practicing humane

treatment of prisoners. Every year the State Department issues a report condemning other nations of violating international treaties that forbid "cruel, inhuman and degrading" treatment of prisoners. Now, the President and Vice President are calling for the exemption of the U.S. from that philosophy, allowing for torture of foreign nationals by the CIA. Ostensibly this is to help us in a terror emergency, but how do you define an "emergency," and who decides if the detainee is guilty?

In the last few years, we've seen secret prisons around the world where suspected terrorists "disappear" without civil oversight, Red Cross registry, or any representation at all. Prisoners have been tortured and killed with little accountability. Even at home, under the guise of homeland defense, we are searched every time we travel by air; our Web browsing, e-mail, and library rentals can be secretly inspected; our phones can be tapped without justification; and, we may even have to sign a "loyalty oath" just to attend a political rally where questions to candidates are pre-approved.

Enough is enough! American policies must uphold the basic rights of Mankind!

Jason A. Kilgore
Junction City

Out loud

"They're toast."

— Eugene Emergency Program Manager **Chuck Solin** on what would happen to the cars beneath City Hall if a major earthquake hit Eugene.

"If you're looking for a big pile of waste, you're not going to find it because we don't have one."

— University Environmental Manager **Nick Williams** on hazardous waste on campus.

"It's my dream."

— University President **Dave Frohnmayer** about his hopes to acquire as much land as possible in the east campus neighborhood in order to build a land bank for future administrations.

"If we do not sell it we have no — zero — resources with which to acquire any of this property that the University needs."

— Senior Vice President and Provost **John Moseley** at the University Senate meeting on why the University is hoping to sell Westmoreland Apartments.

"How do you expect us to go forward when we are being told of the decision rather than decisions being made by all?"

— University Senator and biology professor **Nathan Tublitz** on the faculty's lack of involvement in the administration's decision to sell Westmoreland.

"Is it lies, or are they really just as ignorant as they appear?"

— Graduate student **Joe Christison** to the State Board of Higher Education regarding the University's botching of the number of international students who hold leases at Westmoreland. The University originally said there were 25 but has since concluded that there are 87.

"We went to learn about mushrooms and found out about everything. I can guarantee that universities in Armpit, Idaho, and Pooptown, Nebraska, don't have a program like this."

— Eugene resident and mushroom enthusiast **Dan Shankle** on the Outdoor Program's day-long mushroom hunting expedition near Shotgun Creek.

"I think everyone acknowledges that changes need to be made."

— Ward 1 City Councilor **Bonny Bettman** about the passage of Ballot Measure 20-106, which allows the city council to hire an external auditor to review complaints against the Eugene Police Department.

"Don't be content with just getting a piece of paper from college."

— Film director **David Lynch** during a speech in Columbia Hall.

"If you're crossing as a pedestrian or a bicyclist, you kind of take your life in your hands."

— Ward 3 City Councilor **David Kelly** on the need for a traffic signal at Eighth Avenue and Mill Street near the new federal courthouse.

"Hopefully someone with an open-door policy, even after they get their office at Johnson Hall."

— ASUO President **Adam Walsh** on what qualities he would like to see in the new senior vice president and provost.

"I came in, grabbed a microphone and something crazy came out of me."

— Singer for The Crimes of Ambition **Lisa Blue** on her audition for the band.

"It would require an heroic act of philanthropy to proceed."

— **Frohnmayer** in his State of the University address on what it would take for the University to get a new basketball arena.

CORRECTION

In "New diversity plan forthcoming," published Nov. 10, it was reported that Suzanne Clark is the co-chair of the Diversity Executive Working Group. Clark is a group member, but associate law professor Susan Gary is co-chair.