

Opinion

Legalize marijuana; shrink black market

By Thad Kreisher
Entertainment Editor

Once again the O.M.I. (Oregon Marijuana Initiative) people have managed to get the marijuana initiative on the ballot for 1986. Bad news for O.M.I., as every time the initiative makes it onto the ballot, record numbers of voters turn out to defeat it. The politicians should be pleased, however, as they finally have voter participation.

It seems strange to me that people who normally don't

are about the outcome of most things political all of a sudden become active upon hearing an utterance of the word "marijuana." Many of these voters don't even have the slightest idea as to just what the exact provisions of the initiative are. The only thing of importance to them is that the "ultimate evil," cannabis, is about to become legal. Time to grab the swords and shields and once again champion the causes of truth, justice, and the American way.

Not so fast, guys. There's much more to this issue than meets the eye. Many of the opponents of the initiative have said that legalizing marijuana would only serve to increase drug trade throughout the state, especially to minors. After looking at the provisions of the initiative, most people would agree that these reasons are groundless. The marijuana initiative would allow private individuals of age to grow, and possess a small amount of marijuana for personal use. The sale of marijuana, and

use of marijuana by minors would still be illegal. The initiative would only serve to keep thousands of respectable citizens from going to jail, and to add an estimated five-hundred million dollars to the Oregon economy.

Alaska already has such an initiative, and according to recent ex-Organizational Chair for the Democratic Party of Oregon, Richard Weiss, it has been found that the number of juvenile court cases involving marijuana have in fact, gone down, as has the overall underground trade of cannabis. Furthermore, it has reduced the total number of drug related court cases by 70.

The United States is now facing the same problem that Holland did. The number of people currently using marijuana makes it impossible to adequately police all users. We do not possess the resources or a court system adequate enough to handle the massive amount of cases. The Federal Government has tried to stomp it out by only requiring that an officer have "suspi-

cion" to search for drugs. Sounds suspiciously like the open search warrants of police states.

Take away the illegality of the product, and much of the corruption attested to drugs can be eliminated, as well as causing the dealers themselves a great loss of power. After all, isn't it useless to bribe someone for the right to sell unhindered, something that the people can grow and use cheaper themselves?

What it all comes down to is freedom of choice. We are free to choose whether or not we drink alcohol, and whether or not we smoke tobacco, so why should we not be free to choose for or against marijuana, a drug almost as widely used as alcohol.

Those who oppose marijuana use would still have the right to abstain. It is their right to choose not to if they wish, but is it also their right to choose for others? I feel that it is high time for Americans to be allowed the right to make this decision for themselves.

Vietnam veterans deserve more public support

By Loretta Carter
Staff Writer

The plane is slowly descending from the heavens, wheels bouncing as they hit the runway of the airport, and smoke seeps from the tires as the brakes are locked-on for the landing.

"Home at last," says a young war veteran. "No more guns, no more bombs, and no more death". This thought ran through all the Viet-Nam veterans as they came back to civilization in the US. These young men and women had no idea of what they were to face once they step off the civilian plane.

The airport is crowded with people coming and going from one place to another. A veteran dressed in his class A uniform has just reached the terminal. On his way home, he is greeted by thrown tomatoes, followed by abusive language. A wetness spattered the once neatly pressed uniform. "Baby killer, crazy, why did you ever have to come back no one wants your kind here," says the hippy with the long hair. These words nearly tore the heart out of the young veteran as he stood before his judge and jury. The soldier walks on as in a state of shock and disbelief.

This was the scene that the returning Viet-Nam veteran received from all over the United States as he returned home - home to their country that they fought and many died for: a country of arm-chair warriors.

I feel this is a poor way to show our appreciation for so-

meone who went to war for you and me.

A young boy of nineteen's life was snatched from him just when his life should have really begun. He was taught to kill, to destroy, and changed from a young boy to a man in just a few short months. These boys are to go into a world of hurt and death, watching as their comrades are tortured, their friends murdered, and watching ones brother or closest buddy beg for death while laying in his arms with a bullet in his head or gut. These same young men and women are supposed to come back into the civilized world and act as if nothing ever happened.

Instead of a marching band to welcome them home they got just the opposite: a nightmare. These men and women should be welcomed with open

my life here, fight to make a place for myself in my own country." Still another said, "I thought all the fighting and hurting was gone when I left Viet-Nam."

The Viet-Nam War will always be with these soldiers. They will relive it over and over everyday of their lives. They will never be able to wipe the death and horror from their minds.

I feel that the government has done a grave disservice to these veterans who should have had the standard six-month reorientation period usually required by the Armed Forces before a discharge is granted. Instead, many of them were thrust out into society to fend for themselves. Maybe if they hadn't had the right to reorientation stripped from them these veterans

"I wish I had died over there. At least there were people there who cared."

arms and with "thank you"'s for fighting for us. Society has no idea of what they have done to our Viet-Nam veterans. They have condemned these soldiers to a life of living hell by their abusive and unfair actions.

I talked to a Viet-Nam veteran who said, "I wish I had died over there. At least there were people there who cared." Another said, "I didn't realize that when I got home I would have to fight for

would have been able to cope better to civilian life.

These veterans need our help and support. They want to forget, but we can make it more tolerable for them as they try to learn to live with their pain and put things into perspective. The only way this will ever happen is with the public's support and help. These soldiers deserve much better than ridicule for what had to be done in the name of war.

Correction

The letter to the editor titled "Year's plans detailed" did not carry its authors name, ASG President Daniel Hilts.

Letters to the Editor

The Print gladly accepts any letters to the editor. All letters are subject to editing, and should not be libelous, obscene or false. Letters must be typed and double spaced. It must be signed by author, and accompanied by an address and phone number. Drop them by trailer B.

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