

# NORML: decriminalize marijuana

Editor's note: This article is the first in a series on background information and the possibility of forming a chapter of NORML on the CCC campus.

"In 1972, the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (Shafer Commission) issued its report to the President and Congress, "Marijuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding."

By Jerry Wheeler  
Staff Writer

After an exhaustive examination of the health and social impact of the marijuana laws, the thirteen-member bi-partisan commission was unanimous in its central recommendation: possession of a small quantity of marijuana for personal use should not be a crime."

This is an excerpt from the pamphlet, "Marijuana -- The Facts," issued by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), a chapter of which Charlie Bennett, ASG Vice President, is trying to organize on campus at Clackamas Community College.

Despite rumors to the contrary, NORML is not advocating the use of marijuana or any other drug.



The proposed constitution of the NORML club states: "While NORML fully supports a discouragement policy towards the recreational use of all drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, NORML supports the removal of all criminal and civil penalties for the private possession of marijuana for personal use."

Supporting the removal of all criminal penalties for the private possession and use of marijuana include such notables as the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, the American Bar Association, the National Council of Churches, William F. Buckley, Art Linkletter, Ann Landers, and Dr. Robert L. DuPont, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

So far eight states have effectively decriminalized marijuana -- Oregon, Alaska, Maine, Colorado, California, Ohio, South Dakota and Minnesota. The maximum amount possessed varies from one ounce in Oregon, Colorado, California and South Dakota, to any amount in private for personal use or one ounce in public in Alaska.

The maximum fine imposed is \$100 in all states listed except Maine, where the maximum fine is \$200, and South Dakota, where the maximum fine is \$20.

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NORML played the leading role in decriminalizing marijuana in Oregon (the first state to successfully decriminalize marijuana), Alaska, Maine, Colorado, California and Ohio.

An excerpt from a pamphlet published by the American Civil Liberties Union states: "During 1972 the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse submitted its long-awaited official report on marijuana to the President and the Congress.

Among its findings were: that the use of marijuana does not lead to the use or abuse of other drugs; that marijuana is not addictive; that its moderate use does not produce psychological or physical harm.

The commission recommended abolition of penalties for the possession in private of small amounts of marijuana for personal use, and for the distribution in private of small amounts for no or insignificant remuneration. Public possession, nonremunerative distribution, and use would be punishable by fines, not jail."

NORML has also assisted hundreds of individuals arrested on marijuana-related charges in finding legal counsel.

The ACLU pamphlet lists several examples of sentences passed for offenses, such as the case of a Louisiana man sentenced to 50 years in prison for selling a matchbox of marijuana to an undercover agent; a youth in Minnesota given an indeterminate 20-year maximum sentence for possession of 1/2800 of an ounce of marijuana, the police vacuuming the lining of his jacket to get it; a California case several years ago where a woman was sentenced to sterilization for being present where someone else was smoking marijuana; however, a higher court reversed the decision; and a young Ohio couple who received 20 to 40 years for selling \$5 worth of marijuana to a neighbor. One of the judges who sentenced them said, "They're providing a lesson for others," and the sheriff who arrested them thought the sentence wasn't stiff enough.

In a pamphlet entitled "Marijuana: Q & A", the drug abuse council states: "Until 1942 marijuana had officially recognized medical uses in this country. It was prescribed as an oral medication for such varied complaints as rheumatism, cough, pain, menstrual cramps, and migraine headaches and as an inhalant for asthma. Because of its classification under federal law, marijuana can no longer be used in carefully supervised research."

This is unfortunate, for at a recent seminar sponsored by Research to Prevent Blindness, Dr. Keith Green, of the Medical College of Georgia, told a national eye research

conference in Reston, Va., that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) from marijuana shows the greatest potential for treating glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in the States.

NORML is currently engaged in a lawsuit to reschedule the classification of marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act. **NORML v. the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)**, No. 75-2025, U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus, Petition for Review filed Oct. 22, 1975.

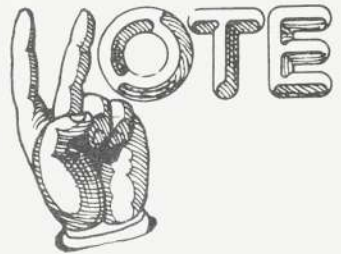
## Free workshops

Early American foods and Thanksgiving decorations will be the subjects of two workshops to be offered at Clackamas Community College, Wednesday, Nov. 10.

First Thanksgiving Foods will be prepared by Lillian Pierce from 10 a.m. to noon in the Community Center, room 117. She will show how to prepare foods such as apple pie, pudding and quick breads in the old-fashioned style.

Thanksgiving Crafts will be taught by Dianna Shaffer from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the Community Center, room 101.

Information about the workshops is available from the college's home economics department, 656-2631, ext. 350.



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