

Marijuana key to man's recovery

By Dan Klapheke
IVN Staff Writer

On October 8, 2005, Troy Davenport was drunkenly barreling down an Arkansas road in the dark of night. He lost control and flew off the road, his car slamming into and wrapping around a tree. He head butted the trunk at full force and was out cold.

"My last memory is a bottle of Crown Royal being passed around," Davenport said. "Came to me, I passed it on. I wake up, regained consciousness 7 months later in a nursing home."

Davenport received a frontal lobe brain injury from the wreck and spent nine months in a hospital and nursing home. He was wheelchair bound and being tube-fed, and had to learn to walk again, but he left the nursing home in 2009 to try and regain control of his life.

But with a severe brain injury such as Davenport's, returning to a normal functioning life isn't without a price. Davenport said he suffered immense pain for "three years of misery" following the wreck.

"I'd wake up in the morning, before I could even get my coffee made I was puking in the sink," Davenport said. "Violently, past dry-heaving. And then I'd be miserable the rest of the day."

He quit the medicine he was being given at the nursing home, as Davenport said it only made him feel worse. The intense nausea and discomfort came from a buildup of fluid in the back of his skull, even with a drainage tube running from his

head to his stomach.

But there was one thing Davenport held on to, and that was the prospect of medical marijuana.

"I was at the brink of suicide before I moved out here," Davenport said. "And the hope of becoming a medical marijuana patient—I was literally a medical marijuana refugee."

Davenport delved into Google research in finding a cure to his symptoms, and what he said he kept finding was that the symptoms of his condition were all covered by medical marijuana.

According to Oregon Public Health's Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP), conditions covered by medical marijuana include cachexia, cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, nausea, PTSD, severe pain, seizures, muscle spasms and multiple sclerosis. There are 66,880 OMMP patients, with 5,880 of them in Josephine County. Davenport is one of the patients, and his OMMP membership covers his nausea, severe pain and seizures.

Since moving to the Valley in 2009, Davenport's symptoms have decreased to coming up once a year, if that. He vomited once in all of 2015 and hasn't yet this year. And in celebration of his 10 years since the accident, last year Davenport decided to go on a walk.

"My way of saying thanks to all the angels that I didn't hurt anyone, I chose to hike 420 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail to promote brain injury awareness and prevention," Davenport said. "That's my way of taking a bite out of reefer madness."



Troy Davenport and his hiking partner earlier this year.

(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

His hike started in Ashland, and Davenport said he headed 210 miles north to Charlton Lake. Being disabled, he didn't want to get too far away from home or out of the state, so he turned around and went back down the trail. He arrived back on October 6 of last year, two days before the 10 year anniversary of his wreck.

According to Davenport, doctors told him he shouldn't have been able to survive the blow from the wreck,

but it wasn't Davenport's first knock to the skull.

"My brain was so scared and calloused that when I hit the tree—it wasn't my first rodeo," Davenport said. "It wasn't so hard for my wires to get reconnected."

Since his recovery and the hike, Davenport said he's done his best to raise awareness for brain injury and medical marijuana awareness. He frequently posts on related Facebook

pages, as well as his own page called HikerXFourTwenty, but said he doesn't quite know how it all works and connects. But he's not giving up.

"If I'd given up before I got here, none of this would've happened," Davenport said, referring to the hike and his life in general. "I wouldn't be a living proof guinea pig that there's this much medicine."

Theater of the Absurd: by Robert Hirning

Back in the spring of 1974 the Oregon Legislative Assembly adopted Senate Bill 1011 in special session. This sweeping piece of legislation ushered in all sorts of land use regulations from zoning and building codes to major comprehensive plans. Up to that time most Oregon cities had already adopted similar ordinances but for the rural unincorporated areas of the county this was the portent of big changes to come. Josephine County wasted no time in rushing forward and the so-called "counter culture" communities of the Illinois Valley, Sunny Valley and Williams immediately realized how a cadre of good ol' boys that controlled local politics would soon have a vast new tool box of anti-hippie ordinances. Somehow the Bill 1011 ended up on the fall voters' ballot where it was soundly defeated in these rural precincts. How it actually got on the ballot in the first place remains unclear but it took hardly 24 hours for the county government to declare this negative vote null and void citing precedence of state law. In a unanimous afterthought the newly formed Planning Commission invited us to meet with them and discuss our ideas and desires in what we were calling a "Leave-us-alone Zone." This

of course was just going through the motions and by the following July when the law took effect the big hammer came down. But that part of the story comes later.

A self picked blue ribbon delegation from Takilma, including this writer, Delbert Kaufman the unofficial mayor and several others, made arrangements to meet with the Planning Commission at their temporary office on 4th Street across from the library and, at that time, a block from the sheriff's headquarters behind the courthouse. After parking the truck we hurried down the sidewalk to the meeting. Suddenly a deputy appeared blocking my path demanding that I show him some identification. At other times I would have been thunderstruck by such an infringement of rights but this was rather old hat for veterans of various 1960s movements and demonstrations. Politely declining and reiterating the laws about "probable cause", that identification is only required for a driver of a motor vehicle but not for a law abiding citizen simply walking down the sidewalk, I proceed around the officer and down the block. Suddenly an unmarked black car with side spotlights appeared from around the corner, the driver feverishly talking on the radio, and two

more deputies appeared out of nowhere, again blocking the sidewalk. Crowding around me with arms folded they demanded identification and again I politely declined. By this time people were stopping to watch including the whole planning commission who stepped out on the porch to take in all the action. Presumably following orders from the guy in the black car, the officers grabbed me and, per nonviolent training, I went limp as a rag doll. This action meant that that the cops had to lower a disobedient person gently to the ground and then deal with a limp body. Searching my pockets they pulled out the wallet and recorded the information. "Oh they got the hippie!" the onlookers were mumbling in hushed tones but then the officers hadn't planned for their next move. "Am I under arrest?" I asked "and what are the charges?" Having broken no laws they had to let me stand up and walk off. This really disturbed the onlookers for if no crime was committed then maybe there really was some truth to claims about police brutality and unnecessary force and profiling, just as black and white protesters had been saying for years.

As it turned out, after a complaint was filed by the ACLU, the Om sign on the back of

my truck was the reason for the entire hubbub. This Om sign is a Hindu peace symbol of sorts looking like a backwards 3 with intersecting squiggly lines which was painted on a brown oval in the center of a yellow sun. Somehow the cops claimed that this was the identification symbol for a secret underground hippy pot collective down in Southern California called "The Brotherhood." Farfetched as it sounds, this was their excuse. Now, over forty years later it all seems laughable when the sheriff's department can hardly field more than two officers at a time and responding to real crimes is often "beyond available resources." Instead of amusing themselves by shaking down hippies who blundered too close to their hive, today's sheriffs have had to leave patrolling the streets up to private citizens, some of whom may even have long hair. The offending truck with the Om sign on the back door is permanently parked out in the pucker brush and I find myself advocating for more officers on the street, hopefully, to serve and protect. The rest of the story about the county's attempts at code enforcement will have to wait for another day. Stay tuned.

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