

# OPINIONS

## Legalizing Marijuana

by Laura Borawski  
Collegian Staff

When I told one of our librarians the topic of this week's opinion column, and that I had proposed to support the "pro" side of the issue at hand, I received a look of surprise along with a smirk that purveyed that "Oh, really?!" remark. We then chuckled together at her response, as she had no intention of shunning me away. The librarian then offered a few words of wisdom- words to live by: "You have to look at things with an open mind." And I could not agree more.

I am not a "druggie," nor do I condone the abuse of any substance; or anything else for that matter. This includes substances like alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, nicotine, etc., legal or not. I would like each of you to read this column with an open mind, and to remember that I am, as are each of you, entitled to an opinion.

Marijuana has been proven effective by various medical doctors, scientists, and molecular biologists in terms of remedial care for symptoms. Despite efforts to endorse the legal use of the drug for medical purposes, it

has yet to pass by the hand of the law. Research has proven these efforts to be fruitful and progressive; however, no one wants to take the next step. According to the March 28, 1992 issue of *Economist* magazine, marijuana is effective in relieving the nausea of chemotherapy, in the treatment of glaucoma, and in the fight to sustain the lives of AIDS patients. Thirty-five states in our nation have endorsed medicinal marijuana. *Esquire's* July 1992 issue states that the Drug Enforcement Administration's own judge concludes that marijuana "is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man." It also stated that a nationwide pole revealed that fifty percent of cancer specialists would in fact prescribe marijuana if it were legal. Forty percent admitted that they had already recommended it! Question: Why would persons of the medical profession, of such intellect, tamper with the illegalities of some drug unless they believed in the positive attributes it had to offer those in need?

Human beings have a tendency to want what they can't have. I am willing to bet that I don't stand alone in this theory as

many of you have witnessed this tendency in everyday life. Children fuss endlessly over what they can't get their hands on, guys and girls go crazy when they are faced with the challenge of winning over another's heart. In theory, then, if marijuana were made legal, it is possible that the desire for it, the fight for it, the kill for it, would be decreased. A



case of reverse psychology.

Alcohol is legal; why not marijuana? After all, look at all the tragedy and misfortune caused by the abuse of a legal substance. A friend pointed out an article to me in his February, 1994 edition of *Playboy* (not "mine", "his"!)

that dealt with our nation's war against drugs. Author Robert Sheer discussed the fact that "the most reliable government statistics" report that though two percent of kids have experimented with drugs, seventy percent have consumed alcohol. Also, the National Center for Health statistics revealed that two-thirds of serious assaults and homicides involve alcohol. Twenty-five to forty percent of all patients are admitted into hospitals due to the abuse of alcohol. Hmm. Makes me wonder why alcohol isn't banned. Oh, I'm not saying that it should be; it can add to life's enjoyment if consumed in moderation. So why can't we regulate marijuana the way we regulate alcohol?

That same *Playboy* offered interesting information regarding drugs on Penn State's main campus. The article discussed that disciplinary policies regarding marijuana would soon be reformed on campus. A group of students that had formed to fight for a marijuana policy negotiated with the law, and after two and a half years, were granted their requests. The policy included the requests that marijuana would be distinguished from hard drugs, and those caught with possession be treated as if

they had committed an under-age drinking violation. Also, in 1992, the University of Massachusetts' student body voted to legalize marijuana use. Students at the University of Michigan did the same. It seems to me that these procedures took place in order to try to alleviate problems at these institutions. I happen to subscribe to these procedures.

After all is said and done, and the facts are on the table- both sides of the story- marijuana should be legalized. Too much of anything is harmful to a human. Responsibility and moderation are not out of reach. I guess it's the alcohol-thing that really bothers me. All the harm it causes every day of every year- it doesn't fly well with me. Our government needs to reconsider. Murderers, child molesters, and bank robbers are having their sentences shortened in order to make room for those convicted of drug related offenses. I read that in *Playboy*, too. Now isn't that comforting to know that a rapist is being exonerated so a person caught with marijuana can be incarcerated? I think not.

## Second Honeymoon

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

Recently, my wife and I decided to put some "zing" back into our marriage by going to a "couples only" resort. This is a popular new type of resort that does not allow you to bring your children, the theory being that it is difficult for you and your spousal unit to get into a romantic mood if one of you has to pause every 45 seconds to shout, "JASON! I TOLD YOU NOT TO SQUIRT SUN BLOCK INTO ASHLEY'S EAR!"

The resort we went to is in St. Lucia, a small and lovely island nation 'way out in the Caribbean, not far from Grenada, which is the island that Ronald Reagan rescued from the Communist Menace. I am frankly amazed that the Communist Menace was a problem in that area, because to get there you have to spend all day scrunched up in various airplanes. I would have thought that by the time the Communist Menace finally arrived and located its luggage, all it would have wanted to do was lie down and enjoy a refreshing popular local beverage consisting of rum mixed with rum.

That's certainly what we wanted to do when we got to St.

Lucia, but we had to spend the first hour and a half riding in a small, couple-filled van from one end of the island to the other on the main road, which apparently also doubles as a strip mine. Technically, you're supposed to drive on the left-hand side in St. Lucia, but the drivers swerve all over the place to avoid the holes, which means that sometimes both your vehicle and an oncoming vehicle are in the same lane. The only strict driving rule in St. Lucia is "No hurtling off a cliff into the Caribbean without a good reason."

At one point -- I am not making this up -- our van was driving down the middle of the road, and oncoming traffic was passing us ON BOTH SIDES. This occurred when we were making our way through a traffic jam caused by the largest banana spill I have ever seen. (Bananas are the No. 1 industry on St. Lucia, followed by tourism and goats.) This was on a steep hill, where a massive load of bananas had slid off a truck, thus forming a tremendous natural defense in case the Communist Menace ever comes back to the area with tanks. ("Drive down that hill, comrade!" "OK! Here we goOOONOOOOO...")

Eventually we got to our

resort. It is what the travel industry calls an "all-inclusive" resort, which means that you pay a flat amount of money per day, and the resort sets out large mounds of food, and you try to include it all in your body. "Hey, I PAID for this food," is what you are constantly telling yourself, to justify the fact that you are already mounding your plate with lunch even though you have not, technically, finished chewing your breakfast.

The food was served on a veranda next to a lovely, palm-fringed beach, so at every meal we enjoyed a breathtaking view of various guys' armpits. A lot of guys, when they are on vacation in a tropical climate, wear "tank-style" tops, so that if you happen to glance up from your food mound just as a guy at the next table raises his arm to signal the waiter for another rum and rum, you find yourself staring into his hairy armpit, hovering in front of you like some hideous mutant alien space rodent.

I think there should be a "No Armpits" section.

But getting back to our all-inclusive resort: For those brief interludes when we were not eating, we were encouraged to engage in a constant barrage of organized fun activities such as

volleyball, water polo, sailing, hiking, sightseeing, wind surfing, snorkeling, scuba-diving, ball-hitting and bun-flexing. At night there were talent shows, newlywed games, group singing, movie-showing, limbo-dancing and of course more food-eating. This level of fun takes a physical toll. If you are a middle-aged person such as myself, by the end of just one day, your marriage has about as much zing as a severely over-steamed carrot, if you get my drift.

To avoid total exhaustion, we left the resort compound several times. We went to the "Jump Up," a regular Friday night event wherein people come from all over the island to a town called Gros Islet. Everybody gathers in a street lined with shoe box-sized bars and people selling grilled food. In the middle of the street are some gigantic speakers, blasting reggae music. It's a fine place to enjoy refreshing beverages and watch your braver fellow vacationers doing a highly entertaining dance called "The Tourist," in which a person attempts to get down and funky while wearing a fanny pack.

On another day we courageously rented a car with 25,000 St. Lucian miles on it (equivalent to 4.3 million Earth

miles) and drove around with another couple, Eileen and Steve. Steve likes to fish, a fact that produced the following actual dialogue:

Eileen (looking at a guidebook): Oooh, Steve, it says here that in this town, you can sometimes see local fishermen gut their catch on the beach!

STEVE: YESSSS!

We drove to a village called Canaries, where we decided to stop, primarily because our rate was blocked by a highway construction crew, probably constructing new holes in the road. We got out, went into a local establishment and purchased some beers from a bartender who was maybe 10 years old. Nearby, three elderly people, two men and a woman, were sitting by the side of the road, passing a bottle around. The woman laughed, leaned way back, and opened her mouth wide.

LUUUUVE, she sang, is a MANY SPLENDORED thing ...the people in Canaries seemed very relaxed, despite the fact that they were not, technically, on vacation. I'm not sure what their secret is. Maybe it's an all-inclusive village.