

HEMP plans program for marijuana information

By Bryant Brooks

Claiming that the public is grossly unaware of the prevalence of marijuana use, Kirk Hemphill, president of the UNL group Helping End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP), said "even the cowboys and Indians out in the panhandle smoke grass."

"Everyone out there, except a surprisingly large number of rattlesnakes, gets loaded," said Hemphill, a former UNL psychology major who now works for a railroad company in Crawford.

Hemphill said plans for an information program to better inform the public about marijuana were developed Saturday at a HEMP meeting in front of the Nebraska Union.

"We want to report to the people of the state of Nebraska the factual information about marijuana use," he said. "A lot of people think only hippies and transient derelicts use it."

Nebraskans smokin'

Hemphill estimated that more than 20,000 Nebraskans smoke grass and more than 35,000 have tried it. Those are conservative figures, he added.

Nebraska...

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Rep. John Y. McCollister saw the debate from the Albion Veterans Club, where he was speaking to Republican supporters. McCollister is giving up his seat in the House to run for the Senate.

Prejudiced toward Ford

"I'm so prejudiced toward President Ford that I would have to say he won," McCollister said. "But I look forward to hearing other people's opinions."

McCollister said he thought Ford's strong points were criticism of Carter and Congress, and standing on his own

He said the group plans to do some "low lever fund raising" to finance the publicity campaign.

We will continue in the HEMP style of brownie sales, T-shirts, buttons and bumper stickers, and raffling a hookah imported from India," he said.

HEMP is also putting together a new initiative petition drive aimed at placing marijuana legalization on the November 1978 ballot. The group recently submitted 3,000 notarized signatures on a similar petition to Secretary of State Allen Beermann to have the question put on this year's ballot. The 13-month drive produced less than the ten per cent of the 31,000 needed.

Interest lack not reflected

The low number of signatures does not reflect a lack of interest in marijuana legalization, according to Hemphill. He said the group had 6,000 signatures but did not bother to notarize all of them because it would not have been enough anyway.

Hemphill said the lack of signatures was because of lost petitions, people quitting the group, losing contact with it or not knowing how to get their signatures notarized.

record. Ford's views on economics, and opposition to "make-work" programs are in line with McCollister's views and voting record, McCollister said.

"I don't think the debate was really very useful," McCollister added.

Zorinsky campaign aides said the Democratic Senate candidate missed the debate. Zorinsky was at the Democrat fund-raising dinner in Fremont Thursday night. The aides said Zorinsky was reluctant to comment on the debate because his statements would have to be based on accounts of the debates rather than the debates themselves.

An approved copy of the new petition will be filed with Beermann next week by HEMP Petition Committee Chairman Larry Hasenbach.

"We also plan to mount a letter writing campaign to encourage Nebraska state

senators to introduce pro-marijuana legislation on in the Unicameral."

Such action, he said, could preclude the necessity of the initiative petition.

Another HEMP meeting to elect officers for the 1976-77 school year is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Oct. 11 in the Union.

LPD officer says leniency, reporting help spur crimes

By Mike Patten

Leniency toward second offenders and a change in crime reporting are behind Lincoln's crime increase, said Lincoln Police Capt. Lowell Sellmeyer, chief of follow-up detectives.

Figures released Wednesday by the U.S. Justice Dept. showed three per cent increase in serious crimes in the United States. Lincoln's increase was nine per cent.

The figures are based on the overall incidences of reported crime for the first six months of this year, compared to the same time last year. During the first six months of last year, 3,773 crimes were reported, and 4,140 crimes were reported during the same time period this year.

Sellmeyer said new programs, such as pre-trial diversion, contributed to the increase.

The diversion program is operated by the county attorney and allows a person to serve his penalty without going to jail or being charged with a crime. Restitution is paid and there is a probation period.

Sellmeyer said he thinks the person should "do the time the judge sentenced."

He said work release programs and paroling for second offenders contribute to the crime rate increase.

"This permits persons who have committed the crimes to be out on the streets," he said. "We need to take a closer look and make sure the second offender isn't permitted to go free."

He also said he thinks Lincoln's population increase contributes to more crime. The population is getting bigger, so naturally the rate is too.

Serious crimes are identified as forcible rape, non-negligent homicide, aggravated assault, burglary and breaking and entering, robbery and motor vehicle theft. Lincoln's rate of robbery, aggravated assault, forcible rape and burglary all decreased during the six-month period.

Sellmeyer said the decreases were caused in part by the formation of special squads.

"By flooding suspected trouble areas with officers, we have reduced the incidences of crime," Sellmeyer said.

Police keep a count of all cases, he said. This identifies the crime by type, occurrence and location.

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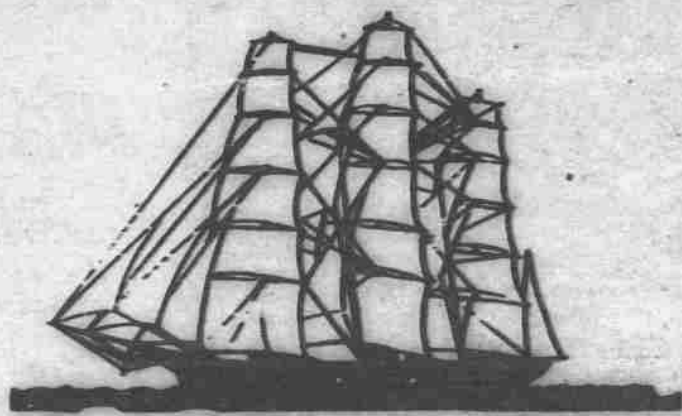
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