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Marijuana smoke-in brewing in Omaha

By Randy Essex
News Editor

A smoke-in is to be held Sept. 16 in Omaha to protest 24 indictments handed down this summer by a federal grand jury in Omaha, charging a conspiracy to import marijuana into the United States.

One of the 24 people indicted is Youth International Party chairman Dana Beal. Beal, who is the co-publisher of High Times magazine and the Yipster Times, was in Omaha Aug. 3 for his arraignment.

During a brief press conference with his attorney, William Kunstler of New York City, Beal announced his plans to lead a marijuana smoke-in outside the Omaha-Douglas County Civic Center at 17th and Farnam streets.

Beal hired Kunstler, who has defended Rap Brown and was part of the defense team for the Chicago Seven and those charged with the Wounded Knee take-over. The two brought with them the radical air of the 60s.

Members of the YIPPIE party did advance work for the press conference, and passed out literature complaining of politics and injustice in the indictments.

BEAL PLEADED INNOCENT at the arraignment, and was released on \$10,000 bond.

"It's a last ditch effort against marijuana," Kunstler said. The New York attorney explained that he thinks marijuana is about to be legalized across the country. He said Omaha may have been picked as the trial site because it is likely the jury will be conservative.

"These conspiracy indictments have a way of popping up in out-of-the way places," he said. Kunstler said he probably will file a motion to hold the trial in Beal's home state of New York. Pretrial motions were due Aug. 20.

If the trial is in Omaha, it would be called the "Omaha 24 case," and would be the largest conspiracy trial in Kunstler's memory, he said.

Beal and other YIPPIE leaders claim the Drug Enforcement Agency wanted Beal indicted because of his knowledge of cocaine usage in the White House. They say Beal will be forced to reveal what he knows about White House cocaine, which would politically hurt President Carter before the 1980 election.

BEAL HAS WRITTEN several articles charging that the "Georgia Mafia"—Carter's inner circle—is involved in a conspiracy to import cocaine. The conspiracy trial, presently assigned to Judge Robert Denney in Omaha, YIPPIE claim, could lead to the Watergate of the '80's.

After the indictments were handed down, Beal disappeared from his Greenwich Village, New York home, and later turned himself in, after all other indicted parties had done so.

The charge carries a maximum prison sentence of five years, and a maximum \$1,500 fine.

Why did Beal turn himself in when he thinks he is innocent?

"I didn't want to end up like Abbie Hoffman," Beal said. "I've seen too many people go underground and get really messed up."

So Beal decided to fight, with Kunstler's help. Beal said he would be at the Omaha smoke-in, hoping for dry weather.

He explained that a White House smoke-in held in July didn't work out so well because it rained, the joints got wet, "and everybody just went back home."

Flight, Study Tours will take to the skies

Students interested in learning while traveling can do so during Flight and Study tours between Dec. 12 and Jan. 12.

According to Christa Joy, coordinator of the tours, 17 three credit hour tours and four non-credit tours will be offered. Joy said students are now being recruited for the tours.

The tours will be conducted by instructors from both UNO and UNL. All of the tours are open to students, and some are open to anyone interested.

The tours that are intended to help teach subjects include: animal science, computer science, economics, fine arts, journalism, law and languages. In addition, other trips include: a safari to Kenya, Africa, a study of London theater, and a comparison of the economics of Great Britain, Belgium, West Germany, and France.

The cost of the trips, based on ten participants, vary from \$655 to \$1850. The cost includes round-trip commercial airfare from Lincoln or Omaha, accommodations, and tuition.

Recruiting traditionally is done by the instructors, in cooperation with the Division of Continuing Studies and International Educational Services.

Professor Harsh Gupta, associate professor of economics, said he has had excellent returns recruiting students for his tour, entitled "A Comparative Study of Selected European Economics". He said that he likes to explain and discuss the elements of his tour with students before they enroll.

The Flights and Study Tours began organizing their tours in January. Students can enroll at any time and presently, there are 25 enrolled. Based on a minimum of ten students per tour, a total enrollment of 210 students is possible.

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