

SEAN GREEN

Ill cruelly denied marijuana



Once again, the government has proven how far it will go to interfere in the lives of its citizens, although I don't remember anyone asking the government for more proof.

Thirteen people in the United States are allowed, by law, to smoke marijuana. Because of some bureaucratic oversight, I am not one of them.

Anyone else who smokes marijuana is considered to be a common criminal, a rogue, a blight on the face of American society. That includes some sufferers of cancer, AIDS and glaucoma, who use the drug as medicine.

On March 10, the Public Health Service cut off the use of marijuana in the treatment of these illnesses for all but the 13 patients who already are using the drug legally, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

The government said it would stop processing applications for legal marijuana use until it finished reviewing reports of the health benefits and dangers of pot, including potential lung problems in AIDS patients and others with damaged immune systems, the Chronicle reported.

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The Chronicle reported that in 1988, while undergoing chemotherapy for cancer of the colon, Jo Daly, a former San Francisco police commissioner, discovered that a few puffs of a marijuana cigarette stopped the treatment's "hideous nausea and pain."

"I can't explain to anyone how violently ill you can become after chemotherapy," Daly said. "You lose control. It's like a nuclear implosion inside your body. The word nausea doesn't even come close."

She said that only a few puffs on a joint made the pain and nausea of chemotherapy almost tolerable. That is, until the local narcotics division breaks down your door and you wind up in prison married to the guy with the most cigarettes.

Daly said she linked up with a small network of cancer patients that was able to supply her with the marijuana she needed before her cancer went into remission.

Among those who said they were incensed by the ruling was Dennis Peron, a member of the board of directors of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

continues to smoke pot. But when faced with the options of being blind or maybe having a few medical problems down the road, most people would probably use marijuana.

Some would use it more willingly than others, but that's a matter of personal taste.

The Public Health Service, the government body behind this nonsense, is telling AIDS patients they can't smoke until it is determined what effects pot has on their damaged immune systems, specifically their lungs.

But it seems AIDS patients might be willing to risk the chance of long-term side effects in order to keep an occasional meal down.

AIDS and cancer patients are not the same as 14-year-old future Olympic stars who are constantly told to "just say no." AIDS and cancer patients are victims of deadly diseases who might like to spend whatever time they have left with some measure of dignity and in as little pain as possible.

But the government simply can't allow it. Seeing cancer patients smoke pot would send a message to all the 14-year-old future Olympic stars that smoking pot is good.

In its infinite wisdom, the government is advocating the use of an alternative to pot. It's a pill called Marinol, containing tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, marijuana's active ingredient.

Because this pill would eliminate the dirty deed of lighting up a joint, the government is all for it. And like most things the government wholeheartedly supports, it doesn't work.

The cancer and AIDS patients who tried swallowing this pill to cure their nausea couldn't keep it down, so it seems the battle will continue.

Maybe groups such as NORML dream of a day when everyone will be able to get a prescription for marijuana or when the drug is completely legalized.

But while the rest of us argue about the issue, the people marijuana can really help should be able to get it without facing the prospect of arrest.

Green is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter and columnist.

(NORML).

"This is the meanest and rudest thing the government has ever done," Peron said.

Not quite. Lowering the speed limit to 55 was the meanest, rudest thing the government has ever done.

But this ruling was still rude.

Glaucoma patients also are upset by the ruling because marijuana helps them keep their eyesight.

"This is outrageous," said Robert Randall, 44, the first person in the country to participate in the government program. "I will continue to see while other glaucoma patients go blind."

Without marijuana, he said, "I would be walking around with a cane and a dog. Since I started smoking pot, my vision has not gotten any worse and I don't get the tricolored halos or the blurriness."

Randall said the only reason he wasn't blind was because he had smoked 10 cigar-sized joints each day for 18 years.

Some medical evidence indicates that Randall might have other problems with his lungs or his brain if he

Right, wrong of homosexuality not absolute

Sometimes, I wonder what good it is to respond to letters from individuals such as Rick Mitchell ("God condemns homosexuality," DN, March 11). His letter is clear evidence that he reads/listens/learns only to support beliefs that he already has. I believe that each of us is guilty of this to some extreme, yet there are those who also allow an openness to new and various experiences to reshape and even change some of their views.

I grew up in a small town and attended Catholic schools until my senior year. I've attended services in the Lutheran, Methodist and other denominations' churches and I've found that the beliefs of the Christians are as varied as the people who attend these services. I would be presumptuous if I spoke for all Christians, and it amazed me to see Mr. Mitchell speak not only for all Christians but for God, too. He stated, "... Christians do not condemn homosexuals, God does."

Has Mr. Mitchell and God often spoke about this together? Or is his source one of the various interpretations of the Bible that even scholars versed in the original languages still argue over. And whether directed by God or not, the various books of the Bible were written by human beings, who not only were influenced by the culture and times they lived in, but who also were susceptible to an ailment known to all mankind ... the

ability to err.

I find it hard to believe that a God such as I believe in would condemn any individual who does not believe in Jesus even if that individual has been the most loving of men or women throughout his/her life. I can't perceive of a God who would condemn anyone for loving another, whether the person be of the opposite or the same sex. To me, sex is a beautiful means of expressing love, whether the lovers be heterosexuals or homosexuals and lesbians. The only time that I see any ugliness within the sexual act is when it is used in anger, abuse, manipulation or without feelings for the person you are with.

Mr. Mitchell also expressed disgust with "... the lies and deception that the homosexual community has bought into." As though any one person would want to live a life of lies and deception! Not long ago, I observed and supported two friends (one male, one female) who tried to break out of the deception/lies lifestyle they maintained by admitting their sexual preferences to the captain of a military base. Both were involved in jobs that necessitated high-level clearances, and out of respect to those positions, they came forward in order to prevent any chance of blackmail.

Both had been awarded numerous times for their outstanding job performances. Both were highly respected. Within hours of their announcement,

the two were demoted to janitorial duties. They never again were able to resume their duties despite their excellent evaluations and the support of several character witnesses. Eighteen months of study and two years of excelling at their jobs, and the result of their honesty was a demotion to custodial duties for four months and then a discharge from the military.

I have a brother who worked in an adolescent shelter in L.A. for over a year. He can quote you the statistics. I can't, but he commented often on the fact that the kids who are out on the streets are mostly those running away from abusive homes and teens who were thrown out of their homes because they admitted that they were gay/lesbian. And Mr. Mitchell wonders why the deceptions ... why the lies.

Rick Mitchell seems confident of what is right and I wish him well in his unquestioning rightness. But each day I meet a new challenge that makes me question what I consider and have been taught to consider as right. I can find no absolutes. Instead, I rely on my instincts and allow my experiences to keep myself aware and ever-changing. The only right that I know as a Christian is to keep from causing unnecessary harm or pain to another.

B.K. Cheshire
graduate
Russian and psychology

LETTER POLICY

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