

Recreational marijuana legal in Colorado and Washington

BY JAMES ROWE
STAFF WRITER

It seems that each year a topic comes up in politics over an issue the government has been debating for the last 50 years. It is the debate of whether marijuana should be legalized.

Every time I hear someone talking about marijuana or going out to smoke, they seem so secretive about it.

In America, marijuana is illegal, and people have to hide it when they smoke.

But not for long. Recreational marijuana use is now legal in Colorado and Washington.

It was on election night, Nov. 6, when the news came out that these states legalized it. Lots of avid users became ecstatic over the news. The governor of Colorado said in an interview with CNN that they were looking to respect the will of the voters.

I myself was never really into using marijuana for fun. I was really first introduced to what weed was and the whole culture of it when I came here. I never saw anyone smoke it or ask me to smoke it in high school. I saw what it was like and I just don't care for weed. But should it be illegal? God no!

"I think it should be legal. Really the legality of it doesn't seem like it should be a question. It feels like a bread and butter political issue," said Carnegie Mellon University senior Jonathan Blake. "(If) you legalize marijuana, it would cause the supply to go up and prices to go down. When prices go down, you get people who use it more casually. That and they don't have the

fear cracking down on them. You also see the marijuana trafficking business becomes less profitable."

When you look at the judicial issues associated with the legalization of marijuana, it seems silly to put people in jail or prison because of selling or using marijuana when there are more serious criminals out there.

Marijuana should not be an issue. Has one ever heard of someone going crazy

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and going on a dangerous rampage on marijuana? No. Has anyone overdosed on it? No. So why is it an issue?

Senior Josh Barker shared the same feelings.

"I think like gay marriage, pot legalization will move forward slowly state by state," he said. "I think that this is a good step forward, but that marijuana legalization should take the back seat to more important issues, including, but not limited to gay marriage."

The other thing that is one would

look at is the health of a person when using the three most common drugs in America: alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. You can get alcohol poisoning and die, or you can even die from alcoholism. With tobacco it can cause lung cancer. Marijuana? It just kills the motivation of a person, not the heart.

"I think it's great," said junior Caroline Peck. "Considering marijuana is less dangerous than both alcohol and tobacco, it's a surprise it wasn't legal before. I think it's a breakthrough, and I hope many other states follow suit."

"Honestly, I think it's needed, just to see where the idea of marijuana legalization will take us," said junior Mychael Martin-Taylor. "It's been a topic of interest for a long time now and I think it's great that we finally get to see how this decision will play out. If the taxation of the product is well handled, and users don't misuse the drug, I can see this being a long lasting and growing phenomenon."

Marijuana is not a dangerous drug. That is one main reason why it should be legal. This is a great step for America as this will hopefully mean the end of the drug trafficking that has been plaguing the country. If the government can realize this, then the war on drugs will most likely come to an end. This will create more room in the jails and prisons, making more room for dangerous criminals. Plus, you might see some jobs being created for companies that sell marijuana, which will help bring down the unemployment rate. The way America is going, this is something revolutionary.

This Week's STAFF EDITORIAL

Tips for a stress-free finals week

Finals are getting closer every day — 20 papers and essay-style exams loom overhead and threaten chaos — but never fear! There are steps you can take to prepare yourself and tackle these monsters head-on for a healthier, less stressful finals week. Here are a few tips to keep you in tip-top shape during this hectic time.

Work ahead of time, and work smart

Instead of watching reruns on Netflix all night since your paper isn't due for a whole 'nuther week, set aside an hour or two to prep for that research paper, or review one of the chapters that's sure to be on your final. If you proactively break down all of your work into bite-sized pieces, it won't seem so overwhelming.

A popular work model is the Pomodoro technique: work for 25 minutes, then take a five minute break. Rinse and repeat. After four cycles of this, take a 30-minute break and then get back to work!

To keep yourself focused, find a calm study space free of distractions. This might be a dorm room desk, or the Greenleaf, or the library, or the Starbucks across the street — it all comes down to wherever you are personally capable of blocking out the world and getting down to it.

Go to sleep

Last-minute cramming is the main staple of the college student's study diet, but that doesn't mean it's good for you. Your brain performs better when it's well-rested: you'll retain information better, and come test day you won't run the risk of dozing off mid-exam or sleeping through the testing period altogether.

Still struggling to understand a key concept or solve a tough problem during one of your late-night study sessions? A new Lancaster University study suggests that "sleeping on it" actually helps your brain solve those difficult problems. Catch a few Zs and try again in the morning.

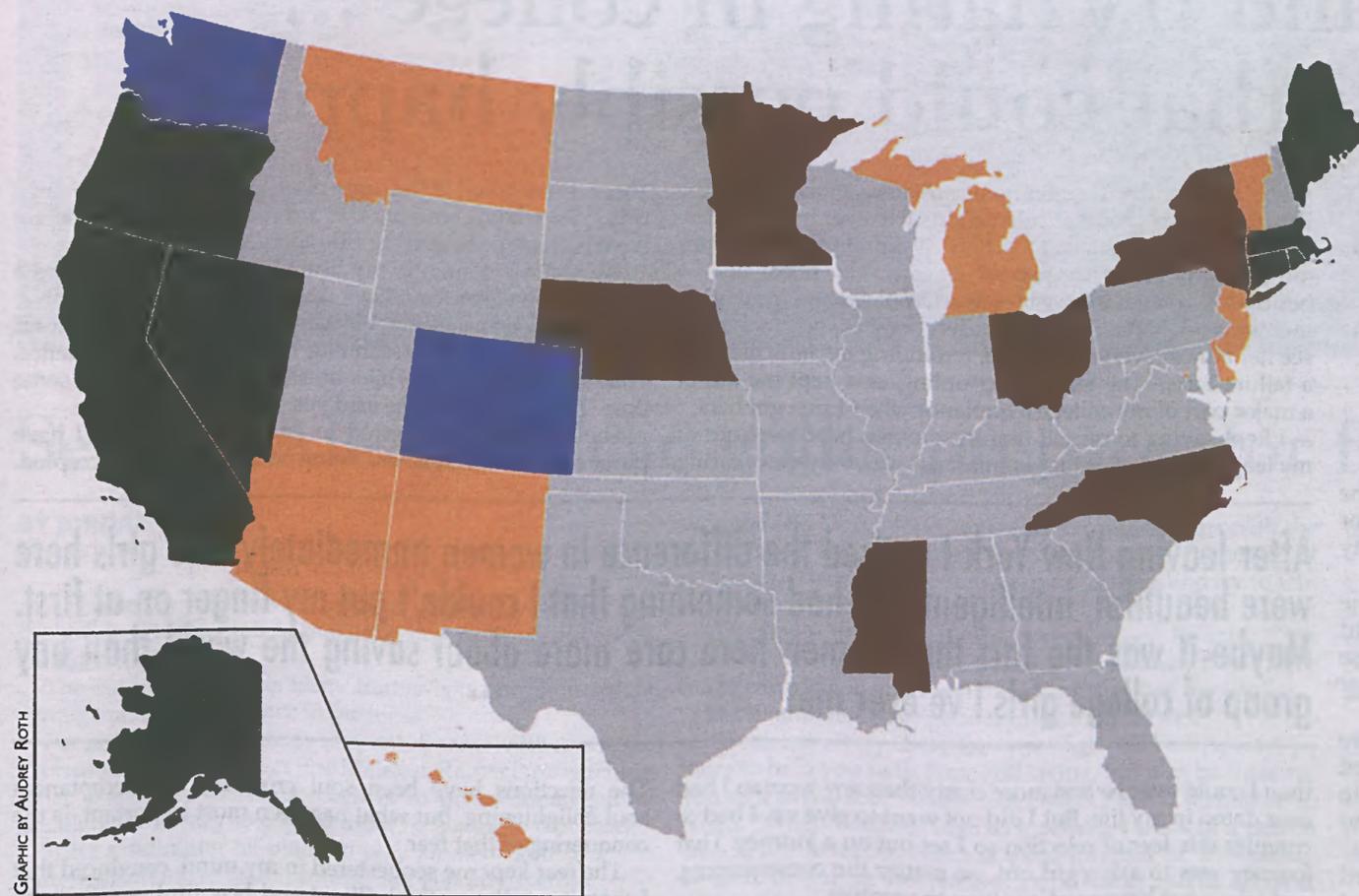
Eat right

Sure, grabbing a quick burger to bring back to your study cave means more time in front of the books, and that soda might give you the caffeine kick you think you need, but you know it's true — your body feels gross when you fuel it with junk, and you won't be running at top speed. Fruits, veggies, whole grains and lean meats are your friends, and for those who are not inclined towards wheat or meat, stay on top of your healthy alternatives, too.

Also, drink plenty of water! Your brain works better when it's hydrated, and you'll feel better, too.

With these tips under your belt, get ready to slay your finals and plow into winter break. Get to work, and good luck!

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GRAPHIC BY AUDREY ROTH

- State with both medical and decriminalization laws
- State with legalized cannabis
- State with decriminalized cannabis possession
- State with legal medical cannabis