

Legalize Marijuana

It is time for the government to take a long, hard look at marijuana and the laws surrounding it.

The harshness of the laws far exceeds the crime. Possession of marijuana carries a jail sentence of two to 40 years. For second offenders no probation is allowed and a minimum sentence of five years is mandatory. In Georgia a second offense of selling pot to a minor can bring the death penalty.

These harsh marijuana laws, the first of which was enacted in 1937, arose due to ignorance about the drug. Often, no distinction was made between pot and hard drugs such as heroin and opium. All were generally lumped into the same narcotics law.

A myth, perpetuated by the Federal Government, has arisen concerning marijuana. According to a Federal Narcotics Bureau publication, marijuana is "pure poison. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the smoking of the marijuana cigaret is a dangerous first step on the road which usually leads to enslavement by heroin."

A former director of the bureau testified that marijuana "is a menace leading to rape, homicide, and other crimes and possibly to insanity as well."

When will the government awaken to proven medical facts? According to a recent American Medical Association statement, marijuana is not addictive and does not cause lasting mental or physical change.

Dr. Joel Fort, a San Francisco psychiatrist, has stated that pot causes no basic personality change, does not cause sexual excesses and does not lead to progression to other drugs. A member of the British advisory commission on drug dependence has stated that it is not even psychologically addictive.

At least one governmental agency has begun consideration of a move to remove marijuana from the Federal list of narcotic drugs. Dr. James Goddard, chief of the Food and Drug Administration, according to the Wall Street Journal, "advocates such radical changes as removal of legal penalties for possession of marijuana when it is intended for personal use."

Laws on marijuana in some 30 states are now being challenged. Some liberalization of laws can probably be expected, but no one expects total legalization. The topic is much too controversial and legislators are too sensitive to pressures from their constituency for very much radical change all at once.

Why use marijuana anyway? Pleasure, enjoyment, and mind-expansion are some valid reasons. One user of marijuana claimed that, under the effects of pot he heard for the first time the bass strain in a piece of classical music to which he had listened numerous times.

Users have described the effects as mild, pleasurable, and beautiful. Proponents claim that while using it they knew where they were at all times. Reportedly, there are no bad after-effects.

One advocate of marijuana on this campus described his experience as "wild." According to him, one can become intellectually stimulated, experiencing depths of thought otherwise impossible. Is deep, contemplative thought wrong?

Today's laws on marijuana constitute unnecessary and unwarranted restraint on individual freedom. They are based on myth rather than fact. For these reasons, our laws concerning marijuana should be revised liberally.

—jls

It's Up to You!

Next week, as you probably know, is symposium week. It can mean one of two things to most people. First, it can be regarded as another week for rapturous cultural enlightenment—for anyone crazy enough to sit through all those boring "super-great" speakers.

Second, it can be taken for what it is—a well-planned, interesting and informative week for learning more about the vital happenings in our nation and world today.

Of course, what you get from the symposium depends on you to a large degree. The visiting speakers know what they are talking about. It's up to you to learn from them. If you go with the attitude that Edward Morgan doesn't have anything to offer you, you're probably right. If, however, you go with the attitude that maybe he has something worthwhile that you can learn, your chances of learning something are a lot better. —jls

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS



"A WORD OF WARNING — DON'T DRINK ANY OF HIS SILLY CONCOCTIONS."

Letters to the editor . . .

To the editor:

Frankly, efforts have not been made to improve the relationship between students and the administration. It is evident that a letter is in store, stating one of my discontents with the campus here at Mars Hill.

I would like to see one facet of student life on the campus improved — namely the quality and quantity of entertainment. I dislike the way that the entertainment committee is selected.

Presently this committee is composed of five students and five faculty members. These five students are chosen for the committee by the SGA president and approved by our one and only Dean of Students. This fiasco of a committee then chooses what you and I will hear for the coming year, but its proposals sometimes go unheeded. They are thrown out, somewhere in the Dean of Students office. We then get to hear what two very special people decide is best for us.

I find fault with this entertainment set-up because it is not democratic and is not doing the job that the student body needs it to do. It is not the will of the people who are paying for the entertainment—namely the students. I feel that I can present a better system.

I suggest that the students nominate and elect ten students to represent them. This committee would be entirely composed of students. It would select 25

to 50 groups which could be brought to the campus. This list of artists would then be presented to the student body, who could vote for artists they would like to hear. The artists polling the highest totals would then be solicited, contracted, and brought on campus the following year.

It should be understood that the election would only apply to the contemporary entertainment and not to the lyceum series. I feel that if the student is to obtain culture, then the choices for cultural events should be chosen by a faculty committee.

Considering the fact that football will be missing from our campus next semester, let me suggest that a larger amount of money be appropriated to the budget for the contemporary entertainment.

In the next few weeks you will see a petition being circulated on campus for this proposal. If you are the "action student" and would like to see a change in our entertainment picture, then please sign your name.

This simple plan of change has been presented with a sincere hope for action on the part of the student body. I believe that this will be a precedent for other major changes in our life as students of Mars Hill College.

—J. Darwin McIntyre

The Hilltop welcomes letters from interested persons. All letters should be typed or legibly written and sent to the editor, box 616-C. We reserve the right to reject, edit, or condense. Opinions expressed are those of the writer. —jls

Around Campus Symp

Wanted for robbery! That's the notice hanging in the Hilltop office. Dr. Roman Gorski of the Business department submitted a poem entitled "Analyze" for publication in the Hilltop. With all plans to publish it, the editor began searching his copy box, where it last was seen. Unfortunately the poem was not to be found anywhere. Our loss is somebody else's gain.

Congratulations to Ben Broadway and Annette Swafford who were married on Feb. 15, in Franklin by Ben's father. They are living in the basement apartment at Huffman.

The Science Honor Club has elected its officers for the spring semester. They are: president—Ruff Wheless, vice president—Lynn Magann, secretary—Linda Alt, treasurer—Wilson Laney, devotion chairman—Gordon Plumblee, social committee—June Bullard, Cynthia Floyd, and Diane Sams.

In addition to admitting 18 new members the Business Honor Club recently elected new officers. Eddie Way was elected president; Bob Pegg, vice president; Maxie Rayford, secretary; and Sandra Coston, treasurer.

Work is progressing towards the establishment of a campus radio station. At a recent meeting with President Bentley, Dean Lynch and Mr. Melvin Hayes outlined their plans. It was decided, for practical reasons, to start with a carrier current broadcasting system. Basically, it is designed to broadcast over the college powerlines to all campus buildings and dorms.

The lowest available estimates for the cost of essential equipment were presented, and financial backing was discussed. President Bentley stated that funds for the station's upkeep could be appropriated beginning with next year's budget (this year's budget has already been set).

The advantages of and uses for a college station were examined:

- 1) Entertainment based on student preference (college top ten?).
- 2) A ready source for campus announcements, meetings, upcoming events, lost-and-found, for sale, etc. . . .
- 3) Tapes of music, etc. could be played over the station upon student request, such as highlights of the recent Avante Guard performance.
- 4) It would provide a useful outlet for students interested in a possible career in broadcasting or electronics; a radio club could be started.
- 5) As the station grows with the accumulation of funds and equipment, it could eventually be converted into a regular AM or FM station.


The important factor at this point is to start the station. Much has already been done: A location for the studio has been found and approved; the president and faculty have given their support; buildings and grounds has given its cooperation as far as any necessary construction is concerned; regulations and approval have been received from the F.C.C.; operating expenses for a radio station will be in next year's budget; a faculty sponsor has been found; and finally, willing persons, capable of installing and operating the equipment are here on campus.

Two hundred dollars was received from the student government. About \$300 more is needed to purchase the minimum equipment necessary to begin broadcasting. Anyone having connections with any electronics firm, etc., which might defray costs, or any practically money raising ideas, see Dan Hayes or Tim Ellmore. Support or introduce motions in your social or other clubs for financial assistance to the project.

Next fall has been sighted to start broadcasting, but . . . with active student support it is possible for operation to begin this semester, if only for the last week or two—it would be nice to hear your favorite music during exams, wouldn't it? It's up to you.

Seven conferences which should bring approximately 1,500 visitors to the campus have been scheduled for this summer, according to the president's office. The first one, a workshop for music teachers, will begin June 10; and the last one, a conference for public school maintenance men, will end Aug. 9. Other groups slated to use the campus as a meeting place are N. C. Baptist pastors, church leaders and their families; members of high school student councils; N. C. school superintendents; a group of adults studying scientific means of preventing alcoholism; and a youth temperance council group.

Drama professor James Thomas and his wife teamed up recently for quite a production. The result was a 6 pound, 12 ounce boy. He arrived Feb. 17 and has been named Jason Wray.




the Mars Hill College

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Second-class postage paid at Mars Hill, N. C.
Published 15 times during the college year.
Box 486-T, Mars Hill, N. C. 28754



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