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Alcohol vs. Marijuana

How ironic that the average American can get wasted, party it up, and often get in a fight, and nobody legally frowns upon it. But someone sparks up a joint in their living room and watches cartoons police accost and arrest them as a criminal.

If you go to a party where there is a lot of alcohol, you are likely to find loud and rambunctious partiers pushing each other around proving supremacy. Your average stoner would prefer to discuss the deeper meaning of life, how awesome the weed is, complain about the “munchies” and laugh at mundane flashings on the television.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance Network, over half of a million people were arrested for possession of marijuana. Marijuana is considered a “gateway drug” for more harmful substances to reach the public.

According to the DPAN, authorities created the “gateway theory” because of the popularity of weed, even among those using harder drugs. But the average stoner prefers the “all natural” approach, and isn't interested in any other kind.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that marijuana causes temporary memory loss, loss of coordination, temporary states of euphoria and heightened sensitivity to sights and smells. According to NIDA 6-11 percent of all fatal accident victims had marijuana in their system. What they also record is that most of those same people had alcohol in their system.

The problem is not with the marijuana, but with the alcohol. Marijuana makes most people happy and easily amused, while others mellow out, but rarely does a user feel the urge to move very far from their present location on the couch.

According to the Centers for Disease Control reported 61 percent of adults used alcohol in 2007, and over 22,000 people died from alcohol use. Some of these deaths were liver related, and many were violence or driving related.

On the flip side, the National Institutes of Health reports that only 8.3 percent of Americans over the age of 12 use illicit drugs. Drug induced death, including harder drugs such as cocaine, are averaging around 15 people out of every 100 thousand. Marijuana deaths? Minimal.

Science has even found marijuana to have great medical uses, including: reduction of nausea and pain in chemo patients, increased appetite for those with AIDS and even neurological benefits.

Despite many medical uses for marijuana the American Medical Association still prohibits its use. Though there are other drugs in place to deal with the same symptoms marijuana could treat, some people don't like synthetic medication. And marijuana is

often cheaper to attain, and doesn't require a prescription.

Authorities need to take into account their own statistics and realize that marijuana users are not a threat to anyone. They allow alcohol to be served at restaurants and sold in stores, while marijuana can't even be used in the medical world.

Why marijuana can't be legalized and taxed like alcohol is beyond logic. In 2006 a Tax Policy Institute recorded over \$5 million in revenue from alcohol sales tax, and over \$14 million from cigarettes. Imagine the tax benefits that could be generated via the legalization of marijuana.

As for potential dangers, a comparison the two users should make things obvious. Someone drinking alcohol has potential to become violent, drive while impaired, or start a physical fight. The biggest threat a user of marijuana poses is to your refrigerator.