

**INSIDE BUSINESS**

# Recreational marijuana – a perspective

When Punky Brewster came out as a spokesperson for the "Just Say No" campaign in 1985, I was, at the tender age of 8, sold on the proposition that I should not "do drugs." As a result of this early training, I believe, on some primordial level, that if you use marijuana, your brain will indeed fry like two eggs on a skillet, and I still can't get past the instinctual feeling that there's something not quite right about using pot.

Yet, on a conceptual level, many of the arguments for the legalization of recreational marijuana have prevailed upon me. When it came time to put rubber to the philosophical road in the last election, I was surprised to find myself in support of Amendment 64 and the legalization of retail marijuana. Two out of three days, I am at peace with my decision to vote for legalization. On the third day, I have my reservations.

Many of my reservations are founded on the central doctrines of the "Just Say No" campaign, which are simply a part of being a child raised by television in the '80s. My most significant reservation, however, has less to do with the question of whether the liberty to use marijuana is good for your health and more to do with a state law and regulatory system that opens wide the door for the citizens of this state to

violate an otherwise serious federal criminal statute.

Marijuana is still a controlled substance under federal law, the sale and use of which is a criminal act under laws applicable to the citizens of every state of the union, including Colorado. While a gentlemen's agreement is in place between the Justice Department and the state that will permit retail marijuana to go forward without federal interference (for now), I think there are many detriments to a situation like this where disregard of a serious law is viewed as a legitimate option sanctioned by the state. It's a short path to chaos.

I've written before about the importance of the rule of law to a civilized society and that, while we may not agree with a law, it is our civic duty to observe it (with some limited and rare exceptions) until you can effect a change in the law, which you should ardently pursue if you're serious about your beliefs. It's a close call, but, in my personal opinion, the proponents of have done what they can, through democratic process, to proceed in keeping with this ideal.

But the fact that we have a conflict of laws is troublesome nonetheless, so I personally will only accept this state of affairs temporarily. As such, I think that the advocates of legalization bear the burden of

“I think that the advocates of legalization bear the burden of proof ... that the legalization of recreational marijuana is a good thing.”

proof, to the citizens of this state and to the rest of the country, that the legalization of recreational marijuana is a good thing for the people and deserving of adoption as a national policy.

One of the things that influenced my vote on Amendment 64 is that the advocates for legalization sincerely believe that pot is less dangerous than other legal substances and that, if it's given a chance, non-users will eventually reach the same conclusion. Well, OK — we now have a forum to test this theory in the light of day. If recreational marijuana reveals itself to be what its most ardent apologists say it is, then legalization on the national level will and should be inevitable. If "Reefer Madness" sweeps the state, then a return to the status quo ante should be the result.

As such, in my opinion, here are a few things that legalization advocates should practice if they wish to achieve greater buy-in for the concept at the national level.

First and foremost, keep pot out of the hands of kids, discourage them from using it, and don't brand recreational marijuana in a manner that is targeted

to attract them. Maybe this belief is a relic of the '80s, but kids' developing brains are particularly and adversely affected by alcohol and drugs, including marijuana. In any event, it's the law. Amendment 64 does not legalize recreational pot for those under the age of 21, and it prohibits sellers from marketing to them.

Don't drive stoned, and abstain from using marijuana in a manner that affects your judgment or abilities on the job, especially if use could elevate the risk of harm to others.

Finally, keep it within the border. According to [www.priceofweed.com](http://www.priceofweed.com), we're surrounded by states where the street price of pot significantly exceeds local going rates. Even though arbitrage is an American pastime, an increase in drug trafficking will run against the argument that legalization will reduce crime, and it likely won't win friends and positively influence legislators in other states.

Support for legalization will surely erode if, in several years, the evidence shows that the promised benefits of legalization were a myth. Meanwhile, the Justice Department could certainly put a speedy end to this social experiment, especially if the pendulum of public opinion swings in the other direction.

*Matthew Trinidad is a private attorney in Glenwood Springs. He can be reached at [mlt@mountainlawfirm.com](mailto:mlt@mountainlawfirm.com).*



**Matthew Trinidad**  
Pro Bono Publico

Minimally invasive in-office procedures, most insurance accepted.

## Start the New Year with Great Legs!

Let our team of **Board Certified Vein Experts** help you.

Tess Lloyd, Clinic Coordinator  
Julie Current, MS PA-C, Physician Assistant and Phlebologist  
Gordon F. Gibbs, MD, Founder/CEO/CMO, Diplomate of the American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine (ABVLM), Board Certified Vascular Interventional Radiologist  
Christine Unger, RPhS, RVT, Lead Vascular Ultrasound Technologist  
Erika Leyva, Medical Assistant

A proven track record of care and close relationships with referring physicians.  
RF Ablation has less pain and bruising than laser.  
No appointment necessary for custom fit compression wear.  
**Se habla español!**

- Achy Legs
- Varicose Veins
- Spider Veins
- Restless Legs
- Leg Swelling

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN VEIN INSTITUTE AND THE DIAGNOSTIC CENTER**

[rmvein.com](http://rmvein.com) • 970.223.0054

105 Edwards Village Blvd., Suite C202, Edwards, CO 81632

Parker • Pueblo • Cañon City • Vail Valley

## How healthy is your family room?

40% of homes in Garfield County have tested above the EPA radon action limit.

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that enters homes through the ground. The only way to know if your home has radon is to test. Garfield County Public Health provides free test kits. Pick up your kit at these offices or call 970-625-5200.

Public Health  
2014 Blake Avenue  
Glenwood Springs

Public Health  
195 West 14th Street  
Rifle

Carbondale CLEAR office  
PAC3, 520 S. Third Street, Carbondale

Free mail-in coupons for test kits are also available at Parachute and New Castle town halls.

**Garfield County**

[www.garfield-county.com](http://www.garfield-county.com)