

Cannabis: A Year in Review



Folds Magazine discusses cannabis movement

I started *13 Folds Magazine* just over a year ago, on January 13, 2013. It was an idea dreamed up on a 4th of July weekend, spent with three of my best friends, on good ol' Cape Cod. We ate great food, drank a lot of beer, gave cheers to the gods of laughter and thought up a great concept for a magazine that would prove that cannabis is as American as apple pie. Since then, the original concept has evolved and what was intended to be an informative magazine has blossomed into this giant community, well beyond what I had ever imagined.

The truth is that I am and always have been a supporter of the cannabis movement. I believe that the de-monsterization of cannabis will help the economy, advance medicine and solve many social issues in this country. I am, however, by no means an activist. I have never engaged in the politics behind the scenes or the science behind the facts of marijuana. Instead, my true beef with marijuana prohibition is that it violates so many civil liberties and defies all logic. I prefer a common sense approach to any issue that we, as a society, are confronted with, including the War on Drugs. But this does not qualify me as an activist. I am just an artist who is attempting to produce a piece of art that will hopefully entertain people while educating them about a subject that I hold dear.

The surprise to me, however, is how I have been educated throughout this process. I have met a wide variety of people, from all different walks of life (ranging from politicians to troubled teens) and have emerged from each encounter with a new piece of knowledge. Here are just a few of the things that I have learned on my own crusade.

1) There can be no hard line drawn in the sand if the Coalition to End Prohibition intends to succeed in its mission. The concerns of those who oppose an end to prohibition have many valid points and concerns. We have to understand and accept those concerns before we dismiss them as irrational arguments. There is much science to support both causes, though the research conducted is usually biased to meet the needs of the side producing the research. For this reason, nonbiased groups need to be constructed for the purpose of testing and research. Only then will the science be based on logic instead of agendas.

2) Within the movement, there is a lack of unity, which spreads like decay and distracts us from the ultimate goal — to end prohibition. I find that the source of these schisms usually stems from socio-economic differences, misinformation and often ego. Whether you seek to end prohibition for the

freedom to use medicinally, recreationally or industrially, we all share the same common goal. How another chooses to reach that goal is their business, as long as it does not interfere with the movement as a whole. Communication and understanding are a necessity between all members of the movement, for if there is no unity within the movement, it will definitely fail.

3) Once those who support legalization better understand the fears of those who oppose the movement, they must act to compromise with and calm those fears in order not to gain their support, but to quiet their protest. There is already overwhelming support for an end to prohibition. Unfortunately, those who have not given in to logic make the most noise. Quiet their efforts and the majority will more easily be heard.

The basic knowledge that I have gained still does not qualify me as an activist. I do, however, feel that I have gained a better perspective on what motivates the different sides of this heated debate. I understand what it is that motivates the opposition and what must be done to ease their concerns. We must, first and foremost, assure them that legalization will not lead America's youth down a path to destruction. We must show them how regulation will convert into dollars and cents, and help to deliver us from our economic woes. We must present factual evidence of the medical benefits that cannabis holds, and adhere to the strict regulations that the scientific community has set for such research to be conducted. All of this can be done easily enough. It just takes some careful planning and communication. Use the time spent arguing over insignificant differences to come up with plans of action that will lead to a greater good.

Many people are in a rush to see an end to prohibition, myself included, but after 75 years of this being the norm, I believe that we can suffer through a few more. Great strides are happening every day on all fronts, internationally, nationally and on a community level. Colorado and Washington will demonstrate the potential of what legalization can bring. We must wait, watch and learn from these experiments. They will provide us with evidence, statistics and examples of what to expect. This is a new endeavor and the initial results may not be perfect, but they will provide us with a foundation on which to improve. Once these models are perfected, I truly believe that this ridiculous prohibition will come to an end.