

# Vote yes on the marijuana initiative

by Paul Swetzof  
for the Tundra Times

In a few weeks we'll have the opportunity to vote on an issue which may not seem very important to Alaska Natives, but it is. It's Ballot Measure No. 2, the marijuana initiative.

Some people, primarily non-Natives, believe that the possession and use of up to 4 ounces of marijuana in the home should remain legal under state law.

Yeah, the folks who gave us alcohol now want to give our children marijuana. No thanks.

I know that alcohol is legal, and I know that alcohol is far worse for our people and our villages than marijuana. So what? Alcohol is legal and it has killed many of our people, destroyed families and broken up villages.

Because marijuana is less destructive does this mean we should welcome this drug into our homes and villages?

Alcohol is an accepted drug in Western society. It is this very acceptance which has contributed to high numbers of Native suicides, motorized deaths and the near breakup of our proud and wonderful cultures.

Now the merry band of non-Native

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## OPINION

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dopers wants to encourage our children to use marijuana because it's their drug of choice.

They say alcohol is bad, marijuana is OK.

I say it is all bad. Some drugs are worse than others but that is not an excuse to encourage our children to use the lesser of the evils.

Our kids need to know their cultural identity. They need to know the old skills and the best of the new skills. They need to see with clear eyes the wonder of their people, the continuum of their heritage and experience the joy of life in the raw, not through the haze of drug.

Many of our villages have forbidden the importation or use of any drug, including alcohol and marijuana. They have done this under our Native laws, under federal Indian liquor laws and when possible, under the state local option laws.

We should support the statewide recriminalization of drugs, be it alcohol or marijuana. We should en-

force the prohibition of all drugs under our laws and support efforts to keep drugs out of the hands of our kids when they are visiting or living outside of the village.

Don't let non-Native supporters of drug use tell our kids and our peoples that drug use is a right.

Drug use is not a right. It is, however cultural genocide. We cannot condone and must not allow these people to assist our people in substituting an alcohol daze for a marijuana haze.

We can't battle for our sovereignty and hunting and fishing rights while smoking a joint, snorting cocaine or drinking alcohol. We can't talk out of two sides of our mouth.

Let's rid ourselves and our villages of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and all other drugs. Let's show the non-Native drug pushers, bootleggers and importers what we think of them.

Let's kick them out of our villages, out of our lives, and, if at all possible, out of Alaska.

Our village people know how to handle these people, and handle them we must. Then we must take our Native people who have been suckered into helping these fools destroy us and force them to see what they are doing to themselves and their people.

Vote no to drugs. If all of us vote

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as a block for the recriminalization of marijuana, we will be sending a powerful message to the drug and alcohol dealers, the killers of our cultures, that they're not welcome in our villages, our regions or the state.

This is not a liberal or conservative issue, a Democratic or Republican issue, or a Native versus non-Native issue.

A vote against drugs is a vote for our children, our cultures, our lives, our pride and our self-esteem.

On Nov. 6 vote "yes" on Ballot Measure No. 2, the recriminalization of marijuana.