

## LAY OFF THE WEED, DUNCES

In the movie "Network" (1976), the character played by Peter Finch screams out the window this memorable line that launched an instant cult: "**I am mad as hell, and I'm not gonna to take it any more!**" This is exactly how I feel about my County Commissioner Julie Westendorff's recent pairing up with Bobby Lieb, Jr, to vote for a 16-months moratorium on the sale of Marijuana in La Plata County.

As a lifelong Democrat, I have few remaining ironclad principles. But these three I shall cleave to till death do us part: Freedom from fear and undue government coercion, The Pursuit of Happiness, and The Will of the People. In the deafening noise of the current blood-sport politics, I also try to cleave to a residual sense of proportion. The people in my East District of La Plata County die of many unnecessary scourges, five of them truly lethal: Alcohol, tobacco, amphetamines, poverty, and lack of access to medical care. I've watched people dying unnecessarily for 40 years now. Marijuana is conspicuously *not* one of the killers.

Fifty years ago I fell in with a generation I still call **Children of the Sixties**. In his seminal social study "Coming Apart", Charles Murray describes the salient characteristics of my adopted generation: We obtained multiple college degrees, launched into life-long professional careers, worked our butts off raising our families in stable, monogamous marriages. We became pillars of our communities and/or churches; and in retirement we still work just as hard. You see, we *love* our work, paragons of bourgeois probity that we are. One thing Mr. Murray left out, though: The sacrament of choice of my generation was neither alcohol nor amphetamines not tobacco nor prescription drugs. It was, and still is--you guessed it--marijuana.

Throughout the years of fellow-traveling with my generation, the worst damage of marijuana I have ever witnessed occurred in 1975, when I chanced upon a 1935 movie produced by J. Edgar Hoover, "**Reefer Madness**". I laughed so hard I damaged my diaphragm. Took a month to recover.

Lay off the grass, Julie and Bobby Jr. Learn to enjoy life and exercise your freedoms. If you need to exert your Nanny State regulatory impulses, find a more suitable, urgent target. If the Will of the People is not enough of a mandate for you, I am sure We the People can find you a more suitable occupation.

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