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**SEARCH**



**Story by Chris Simunek and Preston Peet**  
**Photos by Comso G. Spacely**

These are not party schools for stupid stoners, but places where intelligent users of cannabis can receive a quality education. What's the difference? Smart stoners use the herb when appropriate, either as a tool to enhance creativity, or as a medicine to relieve stress, while stupid stoners abuse it through inappropriate use.

**#1 EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE**  
**Olympia, Washington**  
**The Geoducks**  
**Founded in 1967**  
**4,100 students**

**\$12,264 non-resident tuition**  
**Fiske rates it the #4 public liberal-arts college; student-to-faculty ratio: 22 to 1**  
**evergreen.edu**



Evergreen State, "home of the hippies."

Mother Nature reigns supreme in the Pacific Northwest. Sure, the lumber companies have been trying for years to turn its beauty into napkins and newspapers, and there are the unnatural acts committed by the odd serial murderer--Ted Bundy and the Green River Killer were both particularly fond of the Cascade Mountains--but after mankind is done carving his mark on this particular part of the Earth, the forest is sure to swallow him up body and soul. This sense of permanence is perhaps one reason Washington is called "the Evergreen State."

Walking through the rainforest that separates the Evergreen State campus from the sea, you get the feeling that you've found the halfway point between Darwin and Eden. The forest is primordially damp, insects swarm your head and the terra firma beneath your feet is exploding with life. Sitka spruce and western hemlock trees arch towards the sun, dripping with vines and moss. At the same time, the rainforest is reclaiming the borrowed molecules of the dead, slowly folding them back into the soil from whence they came.

Occasionally a hairy figure can be seen darting between the flora and fauna, causing my heart to leap at the thought that I'd finally fulfilled my lifelong



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**WHICH DRUG LAW REFORM ORGANIZATION DO YOU SUPPORT?**

- NORML
- MPP
- DPA
- SSDP

All of the above  
 None of the above

>> [view results](#)

dream to observe a Sasquatch in its natural habitat. Upon further inspection, I'd see that the beast was actually wrapped in colorful, loose-fitting clothing and that its long hair was matted into dreadlocks--the de rigueur look of the Evergreen student. Maybe next time, I think, then continue walking.

The leader of this rainforest expedition is Dave Olson. I first contacted Dave after a Google search of "Evergreen State" and "cannabis" spit his name across my Macintosh screen back in New York. Though his hair is kind of wild these days and a thick beard covers most of his face, you can't pigeonhole Dave as a hippie. He's kind of a Renaissance guy who can speak at length on anything from ecology to music to pro hockey. A Vancouver, B.C. native, Dave is a member of what's known as "the extended Evergreen family," which comprises grads, non-grads, part-time students and people thinking of attending part-time. As part of his curriculum at Evergreen, he wrote, produced, directed and narrated a video documentary, *The Hempen Road*. The movie explores hemp from all angles, including the activist community, hemp products, food and history.

"Where'd you get the idea for your film?" I ask.

"I lived in the Pacific for three-four years, mostly Japan. I was doing hemp stuff the whole time, doing research. When I got back to America, I realized there weren't any contemporary films that showed the products and the people and the culture. So I met this Japanese film student and we started talking about this project. He wasn't really familiar with hemp, and was a little apprehensive about getting involved with it because of the negative connotations. I wrote up a proposal and shopped it around to different faculty."

Though Dave found his faculty sponsor to be less enthusiastic than he would have liked, he was motivated enough on his own to see the project through to completion. He printed 2,000 copies, did a little publicity and sold them himself at hemp events.

"Before I came here I thought it was going to be an arts and literature and humanities focus, but that's not really the case," Dave explains. "The science stuff seems pretty heavy. There's a lot of marine biology. A lot of people come here wanting to do stuff about forests and conservation and that kind of 'ecosystem, organic farm and herbology' kind of stuff. The strength is the multidisciplinary approach. It weans you into learning something that you didn't really plan on learning, by bringing it in with something that you really want to learn." [cont.]

## HIGH TIMES TOP COUNTERCULTURE COLLEGES [cont.]

"Multidisciplinary" is the buzzword at Evergreen. It basically means you choose a subject you want to study, then the school encourages you to tackle it from several different angles. You find a professor at the school who you can work with on an independent-study-type basis, then go off on your own. There's no tests to cram for, just a final project at the end, which can be anything from a paper to a performance to a piece of art.



We finally make it through the woods to the beach, which is empty on this day because most students are busy studying for their finals. The beach is clothing-optional, Dave informs me, and on a hot day you can often find undergrads smoking herb and working on their tans.

"I spent my college years in New York City," I inform Dave. "For entertainment we used to watch the rats outside our dorm-room window teaming through the McDonald's trash piles."

"Evergreen provides a country-club atmosphere at a state-school budget," he cracks. Tuition goes for \$1,008 per quarter for Washington residents, \$3,588 per quarter for out-of-staters, relatively cheap when compared with other schools.

I asked a few kids I'd met to estimate what percentage of Evergreen students smoked pot, and most answered somewhere in the 80% range. Given the surroundings, it just makes sense. There are no frats and little sports, so the bonehead scene is thankfully kept to a minimum.

My head is still buzzing from the William's Wonder we sampled before arriving on campus when I ask Dave if Evergreen is a serious school or a refuge for burnouts.

"People work hard and play hard here," he responds. "You see them at the bars until late, and then you see them on campus working late the next day."

From the beach, we wander back to Evergreen's own organic farm, kind of like a living textbook for their sustainable-agriculture program. According to the Evergreen bulletin, sustainable agriculture provides instruction in "soils, plant propagation, greenhouse management, composting, green manure, the use of animal manure, equipment operation, small-farm economics, pest control, livestock management, weed-control strategies, irrigation-system design and management, basic horticulture, machinery maintenance, vegetable and small-fruit culture, marketing and orchard systems."

I can see where that might appeal to certain HIGH TIMES readers.

We tiptoe past the chickens, through the fields and greenhouses filled with lettuce, beets, carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, and tomatoes, until we find easygoing, bespectacled Pat Moore, professor and director of the farm. I ask him about how Evergreen differs academically from other schools. He explains that self-discipline is the key to success here.

"We get students who don't fit in highly structured programs, and because of that, we're going to get very bright and innovative students and we're also going to get the exact opposite. If a student is motivated and interested in what they're studying, they're going to get an excellent education. If they're trying to slide by, they're going to find a way to do it."

"As a faculty member, what was your reaction when you heard Evergreen had been voted counterculture college of the year by HIGH TIMES magazine?" I ask.

"Was it really? Gosh, it's a little disconcerting actually. You probably won't put this in your magazine, but I watch students as they arrive and what happens to them. A lot of them work for me three-four years, and it seems like they start getting a lot looser in terms of their ability to be reliable workers."

"Cuz they smoke a lot of weed?"

"They don't confide in me that way, but I wasn't born yesterday. I'd prefer to

see that than binge drinking. I mean, Washington U. had this big riot in the streets because of binge drinking, and a couple of kids died. Smoking a little pot, that's not going to happen."

That's not to say Evergreen students don't drink, and after we're finished with the good professor, we head back to town and agree to reconvene at the Eastside later that evening to sample a few of the local microbrews.

The air alone is reason enough to move to Olympia--crisp Pacific winds that smell like fresh-cut cedar. On a clear day Mt. Rainier dominates the horizon from 100 miles away. It's the capital of Washington, but still manages to keep a small-town atmosphere. It's got a pretty happening nightlife scene-- Fourth Avenue is plastered with flyers for reggae jams, karaoke, gay parties and retro nights. When we walk into the Eastside, it's packed with undergrads playing pool and drinking beer. Kurt Cobain used to live here in the early days of Nirvana, and the grunge look is still alive, with flannel shirts covering parts of the crowd.

Kenny the bartender pours us a pitcher of Rasputin, a dark brew that's as insidious as its mystic namesake. When word gets around that HIGH TIMES is in the house, I'm descended upon by so many students I can hardly remember anyone's name. Without exception, everyone wants to tell me how cool their school is.

"I'm really glad that there's a school like this in the world," says Emily, a senior. "I wasn't going to go to college. I was just out of high school. I'd spent my entire life since I was five years old in school. I wasn't about to go back. Then I came out here, visited this school, walked around the campus, met some kids, talked to them, looked at their classes... I was like 'dude, this place is awesome!' It's chill, you make your own classes up, you don't get grades, people are mellow, it's in a really beautiful place, there's good herb, you know what I mean?"

Emily started out studying comparative religions, then switched to art and hopes to become an art therapist someday. When I ask her for a few tips on places to go off campus she suggests the Staircase (an outdoor nature refuge), Elwa hot springs, Mt. Rainier, and the Olympic peninsula.

I ask another senior, Sarah, what sort of an education she thought she was getting. She told me Evergreen taught her "the things that high school left out. Such as how fucked up this world is. I'm kind of a glutton for the depressing stuff, so I mainly concentrated on things like, you know, saving the world. Really simple stuff."

I ask her the names of a few classes she took and one stands out and cracks up everyone at the table--"Whiteness, Maleness and the Immorality of Wealth." "The big myth is that kids at Evergreen major in underwater basket-weaving or hacky sack," she explains. "But it's true that my roommates spent a semester building eight-foot-tall sock monkeys."

I start the next day with a tour of the Evergreen dorms. The kids are genuinely shocked when I knock on a few doors and announce HIGH TIMES' arrival. It takes me literally five minutes to find the herb--in this case some B.C. commercial bud. We speak a bit about the local strains, William's Wonder and the Gangsta being favorites.

Talk turns to the campus police, who carry guns and who've been encouraged to step up their profile. The campus cops even print their own trading cards, and the kids actually show me a few with cops posing next to their favorite drug dogs.

"I heard the DEA was here," one student informs me.

"I have a hard time believing the Feds are snooping around dorm rooms," I tell him, but he insists it's true.

"The cops are pretty cool, though," he continues. "A fire alarm went off and the cops came in and found some dope on a kid. His punishment was to write an article about how to hide your shit in your house!"

I have a feeling I'm being treated to a few herban myths, but it's true that the school is not too pleased about its cannabis-friendly reputation. In fact, after I left, the traditional graduation 4:20 on Super Saturday was shut down when rumors abounded that HIGH TIMES would be there to record the event for posterity. We were 3,000 miles away at the time, but the cops chased the kids into the woods. Sorry about that.

After the dorm tour I return to Red Square, the center of campus. There I meet Conner Kenny, a political economy major from Austin, Texas, currently in his first year at Evergreen. Conner is cranking a Bob Marley tape as he tries to get students to sign a petition to close mercury loopholes in the state's clean-water laws. There's a strong activist community on campus. In fact, the college caught a lot of flack a few years back when they invited Mumia Abu-Jamal to give a commencement speech via satellite from his prison cell. In the last year of his life, Ken Kesey also was the keynote speaker at graduation. Declaring Evergreen "the college for all hippies," he gave a rambling speech that ended abruptly when he realized he'd lost the last two pages.

I'm running a little late for a planned photo shoot of the favorite local cannabis strains, but before I leave campus I ask Conner what role he thinks marijuana plays in the Evergreen education.

"It's just part of the culture. People get together who feel the same way about things. Here, people would rather spend their time doing something other than spending money, making money and worrying about making money. It's a rejection of the norms of consumer-driven society." [cont.]

## **HIGH TIMES TOP COUNTERCULTURE COLLEGES [cont.]**

### **#2 NEW COLLEGE**

**Sarasota, Florida**

**Founded 1960**

**634 students**

**\$12,352 non-resident tuition**

**Famous alumni: Rick Doblin, founder of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies**

**"One of only 56 colleges, and the only Florida school, selected for Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges)."**

**[ncf.edu](http://ncf.edu)**

Named a "Best Buy" by the Fiske Guide to Colleges and ranked the fourth best value in public higher education by Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine, this school has an amazing student-to-teacher ration of 11 to 1. "Students create their own classes," says Rick Doblin, "It attracts really talented people who do well in psychedelic studies. Students who get in have already proven an extraordinary excellence in academics." Its bayside campus, designed by I.M. Pei in the 1960s, is covered with towering palms and lush banyan trees. New College is treated to beautiful tropical sunsets and is located immediately adjacent to the small Sarasota International Airport. Some of the world's most beautiful beaches are mere minutes away.

It has highly regarded programs in astronomy, cultural anthropology and math. Another notable alumnus is Bill Thurston, winner of the prestigious Fields Medal for mathematics in 1982 and featured in the film, *A Beautiful Mind*. There's an active NORML chapter on campus. Prices for local herb are average, \$50 for 1/8-oz.

"Marijuana is against the law," said a Sarasota Police Department spokesperson, "but we are allowed to handle it internally." There were only three unspecified drug arrests in 2001.

### **#3 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Ann Arbor, Michigan**

**The Wolverines**

**Founded in Detroit in 1817; moved to Ann Arbor in 1837**

**35,431 students**

**\$32,120 out-of-state tuition**

**Famous alumni: Tom Hayden**

**"Undergraduate Program received a national ranking of 25."**

**[umich.edu](http://umich.edu)**

One of the top schools in the country, both in academic excellence and counterculture history--in the '60s, Ann Arbor was home to John Sinclair, the White Panther Party, the MC5 and the Stooges. Students for a Democratic Society, the leading '60s campus-radical group, was founded here, and Michigan student Tom Hayden wrote much of their famous 1962 "Port Huron Statement."

Popular majors include law, dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, education and music. "We have a great music scene, lots of great local rock bands, and Ann Arbor draws big jam-band groups all the time, like String Cheese Incident, Ekoostik Hookah, and Guster," says David Edelman. The Hash Bash happens here every year the first week in April. There are active Hemp A2, SSDP, and DanceSafe chapters. "Since smoking pot off-campus is only a \$50 fine, people are generally open about sitting on their porches and smoking," says Angelica Leone, the founder of the local Students for Sensible Drug Policy chapter, who confronted Al Gore on MTV in 2000 about medical marijuana and industrial hemp. Local favorite strains include Northern Lights and other kind buds, often smoked at "The Arb," a.k.a. Nichols Arboretum. Tools to smoke with can be found at local headshops 42 Degrees, Stairway to Heaven, and Shiva Moon.

### **#4 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN**

**Madison, Wisconsin**

**The Badgers**

**Founded in 1848**

**41,522 students**

**\$24,709 non-resident tuition**

**"Ranked 8th best public school in academic programs."**

**[wisc.edu](http://wisc.edu)**

The enormous curriculum includes everything from art to astronomy. The campus played a huge role in antiwar activism in the '60s--though a fatal 1970 bombing here devastated the student left nationwide--and maintains a large counterculture community. It is home to one of the nation's founding SSDP chapters and a new Wisconsin NORML chapter. It is the former home of the US Department of Agriculture's Fiber Products Lab, the world's leading hemp-research institute in the 1920s. The annual Harvest Fest is organized by local resident and alumnus Ben Masel. "This is a beautiful school," says Rob Spencer, a member of the SSDP board of directors, remarking on the lakeside campus. Pot is decriminalized in Wisconsin, and the nation's first local medical-marijuana statute was passed in Madison. "A friend of mine got

busted with pot and got a \$120 fine, which is pretty average," says Aaron Monroe, cochair of the campus SSDP.

#### **#5 FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Tallahassee, Florida**

**The Seminoles**

**Founded in 1851**

**35,462 students**

**\$16,424 non-resident tuition**

**Famous alumni: Jim Morrison**

**[fsu.edu](http://fsu.edu)**

Medicine, theater, visual arts, communications, engineering, and business are among the many majors offered. "The theater department is kick-ass," says Chris Mulligan, "and music is always a popular major." FSU was once known as the "Berkeley of the South," but "it's really rough for smokers in the dorms now," says Mulligan. He started the NORML chapter, which had the largest budget of any campus organization last year. Students organized the Tallahassee Hemp Cultural Festival this past year, with a few thousand people attending. Local favorite strains include Orange Skunk, Afghani Outdoor and Black Domina. There were 57 drug arrests last year. [cont.]

#### **HIGH TIMES TOP COUNTERCULTURE COLLEGES [cont.]**

#### **#6 OBERLIN COLLEGE**

**Oberlin, Ohio**

**The Obies**

**Founded 1833**

**2,928 students**

**\$33,140 non-resident tuition**

**Fiske rates it #22 liberal-arts college; 79% of students graduate**

**[oberlin.edu](http://oberlin.edu)**

Besides its world famous music conservatory, Oberlin also has intensive science and arts department, three graduates from which have gone on to win Nobel Prizes. "There's a lot of really talented people here," says Sarah Doleki. "We're trying to get an SSDP chapter started, and we have a NORML chapter. We took part in this year's Million Marijuana March. I don't know anyone who's been busted for smoking here." There were 11 in-school disciplinary actions for drug offenses reported at Oberlin in the last three years.

#### **#7 UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO**

**Boulder, Colorado**

**The Buffaloes**

**Founded in 1876**

**26,035 students**

**\$18,500 non-resident tuition**

**Famous alumni: Glenn Miller**

**"CU-Boulder has been ranked as one of the most wired universities by Yahoo Internet Life."**

**[colorado.edu](http://colorado.edu)**

UC Boulder is home to not only the UC Museum of Natural History, which contains 4 million biology, anthropology and geology research specimens, but also the enormous Fiske Planetarium, and the Sommers-Bausch Observatory. It has one of the largest and most active student governments in the nation, managing a budget of \$22.8 million. The campus is nestled right up against the Rocky Mountains, offering a view of nature on a grand scale. Last year, there were 17 drug offenses, resulting in seven students put on probation,

six suspended, and four dismissed. Favorite pot strains include Cough, Pineapples and Homegrown Organic Skunk 7.

### **#8 HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Arcata, California**

**The Lumberjacks**

**7,500 students**

**\$18,768 non-resident tuition**

**"Humboldt is consistently cited as being in the "Top 10%" of all US colleges and universities for academic quality."**

**[humboldt.edu](http://humboldt.edu)**

The school offers many environmental majors, with forestry and marine biology being popular. Bike and walking trails abound, and there's a lake in the nearby Redwood Park in the Arcata Community Forest. There's free concerts and healthy food in the cafeteria, two Frisbee-golf courses, and lots of student activism in the area of conservation. Located between the Pacific Ocean and massive redwood forests, the school is in a veritable rainforest setting, surrounded by some of the United States' biggest grow operations. Local strains like White Shark, Northern Lights, Buddha and Train Wreck sell for \$30 for 1/8-oz. Smoking implements can be bought at the Humboldt Glass Blowers, Time Traveler or Pacific Paradise headshops.

### **#9 BENNINGTON COLLEGE**

**Bennington, Vermont**

**Founded 1931**

**550 students**

**\$31,350 non-resident tuition**

**Famous alumni: Bret Easton Ellis**

**[bennington.edu/main.htm](http://bennington.edu/main.htm)**

Students at Bennington College create and design their own education, with no set requirements. There are majors offered in humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and visual and performing Arts. The school has attracted a host of famous faculty, including Martha Graham and Bernard Malamud. The campus is located near ski slopes and the Appalachian Trail. In 2001, there were seven drug offenses at Bennington, and in 2000 just two.

### **#10 WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**

**Middletown, Connecticut**

**The Cardinals**

**Founded in 1831**

**2,850 students**

**\$35,930 non-resident tuition**

**Famous alumni: John Perry Barlow**

**Fiske rates it the #11 liberal-arts college in the country**

**[wesleyan.edu](http://wesleyan.edu)**

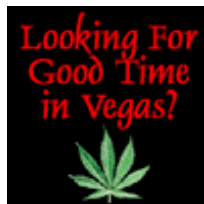
Named after John Wesley, founder of Methodism and an activist on behalf of the poor and downtrodden, Wesleyan University in Middletown has two cross-concentration degree programs, combining history, philosophy and sociology, as well as a popular English department. There's an active SSDP chapter, formerly known as the Wesleyan Cannabis Coalition. One dorm, the West Co., organizes two large music festivals each year, Zonker Harris Day and Duke Day, named after two Doonesbury characters. There were 14 drug-law violations in 2000 with just three arrests.

### **Honorable mentions:**

University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California; Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington; San Francisco State University, San

Francisco; University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon; University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois; Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont; Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida; San Francisco City College, San Francisco; New York University, New York City; State University of New York College at New Paltz, New Paltz, New York; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Did we get anything wrong? Did we miss your school? If you think your college deserves (or doesn't deserve) to be on the list, email us at [hteditor@hightimes.com](mailto:hteditor@hightimes.com)



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