



Have Safe, Sane and Stoned New Year

By Lanny Swerdlow, RN LNC

For all its traditional vibes of home and hearth, for many the holiday season is a time of party, party, party. Family, work, friends, organizations, clubs and more all vie to celebrate the holidays in the most extravagant and joyous fashion.

Alcohol plays a central role in many of these parties as a social facilitator, consciousness transformer and a celebratory symbol of the season. Yet the result of this alcohol consumption is tragic. The National Safety Council reports that over the last decade an average of 400 people are killed each year in traffic accidents during the holiday period with an estimated 40% of these fatalities being the result of drinking and driving.

Although one might reasonably expect New Year's Eve to be the worst of the holiday season, it is actually at the very beginning with Thanksgiving Eve seeing such a substantial rise in DUIs that bartenders and police refer to it as Blackout Wednesday.

During the holiday season, alcohol consumption is promoted everywhere. Ads abound across the media for alcoholic beverages. Bars and restaurants exalt their offerings of specialty libations. Billboards and shopping malls display images of joyful alcohol infused celebrations. The message is unmistakable – consumption of alcohol is de rigeur - so de rigeur that about 15 percent of all holiday alcohol consumption is by underage drinkers.

The media that makes over two billion dollars annually from alcohol and alcohol-related ads, atones for these windfall profits by running articles offering safety tips on alcohol consumption during the holiday season. The advice is not about abstaining or even cutting down but usually centers on avoiding hangovers.

Business journal Forbes advises executives to eat before consuming alcohol. CBS News recommends watering down your drinks. Cosmopolitan endorses taking anti-oxidants while WebMD warns against using carbonated mixers. Even the Mayo Clinic jumps in with advice noting that many people take over-the-counter pain relievers, such as aspirin or ibuprofen to prevent hangover symptoms with a cautionary note that acetaminophen may cause liver damage if too much alcohol is consumed.

Alcohol abstinence most definitely will prevent a hangover, but let's get real here - people like to alter their senses, get a little crazy, reduce their inhibitions and partake of communal traditions and abstinence doesn't cut it. What every single advice article on how to best handle holiday alcohol consumption doesn't mention is consuming marijuana – the one substance that actually can provide all the social-enhancing, mind-altering and spirit-lifting qualities of alcohol without any of the negative consequences of hangovers and death.

If the holiday season is truly about Peace on Earth and Good Will Towards Men, then what is more likely to bring that about – booze or pot?

Whether it be in preparation for shopping on Black Friday, suffering silently at family Christmas reunions with relatives who drive you up a wall or heading out to welcome in the New Year, nothing satisfies like marijuana.

Toasting with the passage of the ceremonial joint is far more communally bonding than booze-filled glasses momentarily clinking together before going down the hatch. High quality, potent marijuana gladdens the heart, delights the senses, fulfills the spirit and heightens the feelings of pleasure more assuredly than alcohol ever will.

If you are part of the significant minority that likes to get totally blitzed, then dabbing, the newest trend in cannabis consumption, is your ticket to a fun-filled, haze-induced holiday season and an almighty New Year's Eve. Unlike alcohol where multiple drinks will eventually knock you unconscious after multiple dry and not-so-dry heaves, dabbing marijuana concentrates can go on all night long. Just remember to remain seated with your safety belt firmly in place.

One of the best parts of consuming cannabis to celebrate New Year's Eve is that come New Year's Day morning, you'll wake up bright eye and bushy tailed. Fit as a fiddle you will be ready to enjoy the Rose Parade, the Rose Bowl or whatever you chose to do on the first day of the New Year including imbibing more cannabis.