



Letters to the Editor

Thursday letters: Drugs and alcohol are a deadly mix

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Crash kills father, 3 sons | Aug. 2

Drugs, alcohol are a deadly mix

In response to the recent fatalities of four men of the McConnell family killed by a substance-impaired driver in St. Petersburg, I felt compelled to speak out about how common driving under the influence of both alcohol and drugs is becoming. Although alcohol is still the leading substance of abuse in fatal DUI traffic accidents, marijuana is the second most commonly found substance in drivers involved in crashes.

According to the National Office of Drug Control Policy, alcohol and marijuana are frequently found together, resulting in a dramatic decrease in driving performance and increase in impairment. Studies show that the ill-fated combination of alcohol and marijuana raises one's level of impairment from a 0.04 BAC (alcohol alone) to an impairment comparable of up to 0.14 BAC (alcohol and marijuana combined).

Drunken driving is a serious public safety concern, but drugged driving is on the rise and a close secondary concern. It's not just alcohol these days that is impairing drivers who are killing our loved ones. I have heard folks say marijuana never killed anyone. However, as a drug policy and prevention expert with 25 years of experience, I can, unfortunately, say they are totally wrong! My prayers go out to this grieving family as well as to all family members who were victims of someone else's drug and alcohol abuse.

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