

The question remains: when will the smoke clear on marijuana prohibition?

Cannabis continued from Page 1

to people then he will be charged with trafficking," Bonner said.

The police stance ignores the winds of change that have blown over marijuana laws in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and, most recently, British Columbia.

In a decision taken September 4th, B.C. Provincial Court Judge P. Chen said parts of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act are "invalid" and that "there is no offense known to law at this time for simple possession of marijuana" in the province.

"There's precedent across the country that simple possession is invalid," said Lynn Wood, but Bonner points out that Saint John police are concerned only with the law in New Brunswick.

"People at the cannabis café, for some strange reason, they thought [smoking marijuana] was legal when in fact it's not legal," said Bonner. "Some people are confused. They seem to think that it is legal, or they're talking about it being legal. The point of the whole issue is: it is illegal to smoke marijuana... It hasn't been changed and we will enforce the laws as we are supposed to do."

With simple possession arrests on the rise (around 50,000 in 2001, 10 times the number from 30 years ago), more and more people are speaking out against marijuana prohibition. Recent opinion polls show 65-70 per cent of Canadians are in favour of decriminalization, yet a person is arrested nearly every 10 minutes for possession.

Bonner said people are charged for simple marijuana possession "on a regular basis" in Saint John, and that trend will continue until the law is officially changed.

"Right now we're dealing with what we have now and that is, it's

still illegal. If and when it does come down to being legal, then we will have to take the new law and... digest it and go through it and take it from there."

Lynn has already said that the café's customers "range from all ages and types of people," but the sight of three grandmothers wandering through stacks of *High Times* and shelves full of bongos is still a bit surprising.

Renee, a diminutive great-grandmother with a frisky smile, said she entered the store "out of curiosity."

"It's a very nice store," she added after browsing through the hemp clothing and purchasing some incense. When asked if they know about the store's smoking policy, Renee's friend Joy is caught by surprise.

"Is this the marijuana place?" she exclaimed. "I'll have to tell my husband about this one!"

Lynn is quick to point out that no tobacco is allowed when the women question the store's policy.

"Pot doesn't linger like tobacco smell does," she explained. "It's not the evilness they say it is." She said that they are simply following many of the standards set out by "compassion clubs," many of which operate as clinics and are virtually ignored by police.

The BC Compassion Club Society updates its recorded menu daily with strains such as "Legends Ultimate Sativa," which sells for nine dollars a gram, and "Jamaican Sugar Bubble Hash," a gram of which will set you back 13 bucks. The friendly recorded voice describes various strains as "uplifting," "good for daytime," or as producing "a relaxing body stone." For those who prefer to consume their dose as a tasty treat, Chocolate Wonder Cookies are among the

baked goods available.

Lynn is not embarrassed to talk candidly about marijuana and sees no reason why she should be.

"It's just what we stand for," said Lynn. "Not just us, but people all over the world stand up to speak out about marijuana."

She said they decided to make the shop smoke friendly because similar shops have been "popping up" across the country, and while they would "most definitely" convert to a full-on Amsterdam-style coffee shop, "it might get that way anyway."

Lynn said the education system fails to teach the truth about cannabis.

"[Negative attitudes towards cannabis] are all based on lies and prohibition. We weren't [even] taught about hemp in school. What's wrong with hemp? Why was it hidden from us?... It was hidden from our mothers and our grandmothers."

While roughly three-quarters of all drug possession arrests in the country are for cannabis, the green stuff is much less associated with

property crime and severe negative health effects than cocaine and other drugs.

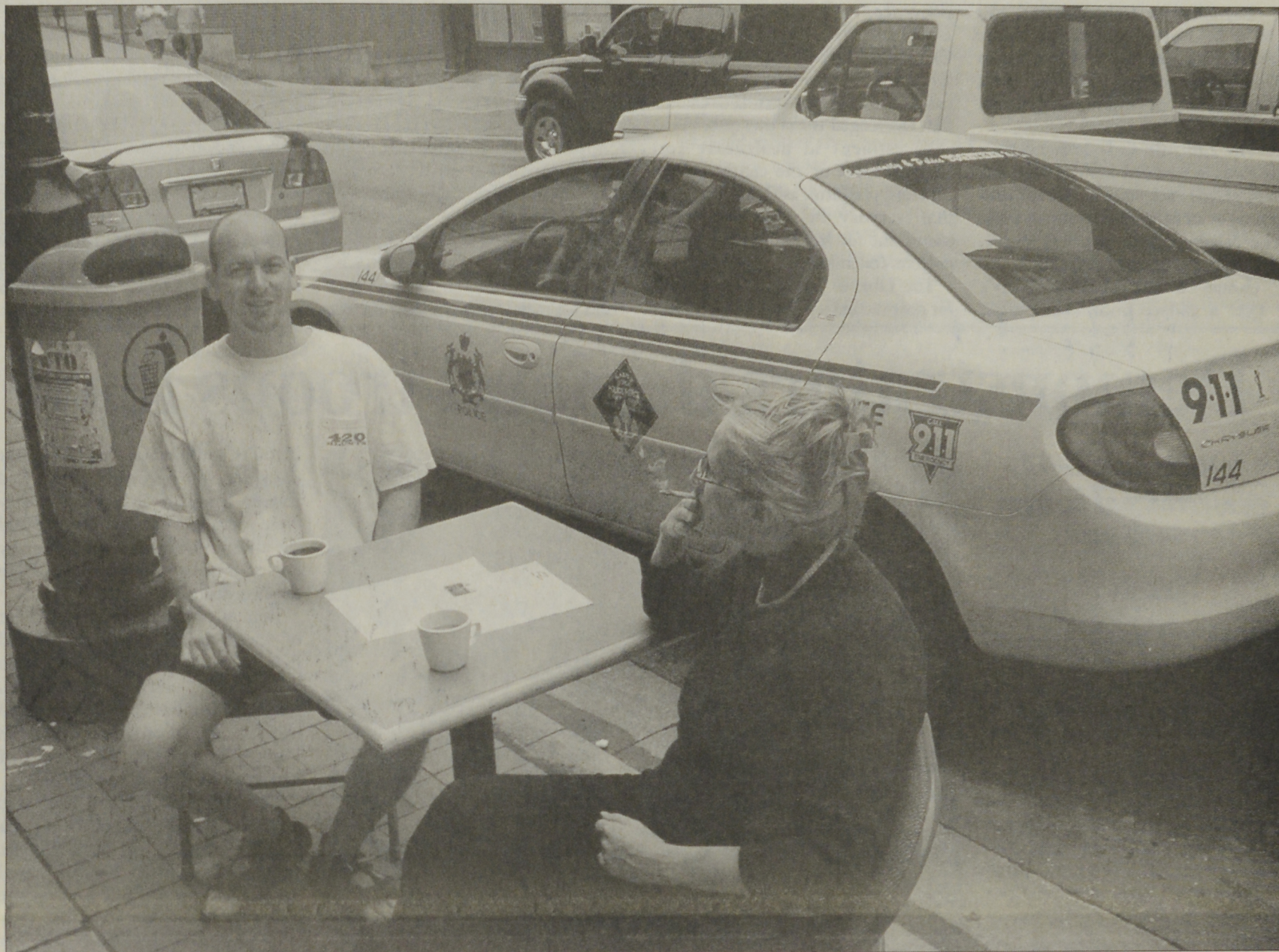
Yet the government spends hundreds of millions of dollars per year arresting people for cannabis, while more serious drug use (for instance, the estimated 125,000 needle users that accounted for 34 per cent of Canadian HIV infections in 1999) is only beginning to be focused on. Vancouver, for example, recently opened the first safe injection site in North America, estimates that 70 per cent of its crime is associated

with illicit drugs, and turns a blind eye to the joint-smoker in an effort to focus on more serious drug problems.

Lynn admits that raising children is a tough job at the centre of all the cannabis confusion but feels she and Jim are doing the right thing by teaching them what they believe.

"We try to be open with them and teach them, and we try to just be there for the public," said Lynn.

"There's been great community support... We just take it one day at a time."



Jim and Lynn Wood enjoy coffee and cannabis outside Saint John's Cannabis Cafe.

Special to The Brunswickan

UNB grads make a significant difference in NB

Campaign aimed at educating people about UNB achievements

by Jessie Davis

"Making a significant difference both here and around the world" is the theme of UNB's award winning marketing campaign that is just entering its second year after a wildly successful first year.

Year two of the campaign was launched during a videoconference in Fredericton and Saint John on September 26.

The campaign, initially launched last year, is as much about awareness of the role the university plays in the New Brunswick community as it is about anything else.

According to President John McLaughlin, its objectives are three-fold.

"To engender a greater understanding and appreciation of UNB's role in the region's prosperity, to foster pride in our university, and mobilize people to communicate on UNB's behalf," said McLaughlin.

On all those accounts, Making A Significant Difference (MASD) has exceeded everyone's expectations. As a result of the campaign, increases in active alumni, donor activity, and student enrolment have been documented. According to an independent market survey conducted in the spring, 95 per cent of respondents felt governments

should financially support universities.

Another positive outcome – government funding for the university has also increased since the beginning of the campaign.

New Brunswickers are much more aware of the impact the university makes in their lives. For example, 80 per cent of all research at provincial universities takes place at UNB; 75 per cent of educators in the province are UNB grads; 17 of 55 MLAs are UNB grads, as are four of 10 MPs.

UNB's list of achievements is long, and thanks to the MASD campaign, the people of New Brunswick are taking notice.

"New Brunswickers now have a greater understanding of our role as educators, researchers and partners in the province's future," commented McLaughlin in a press release.

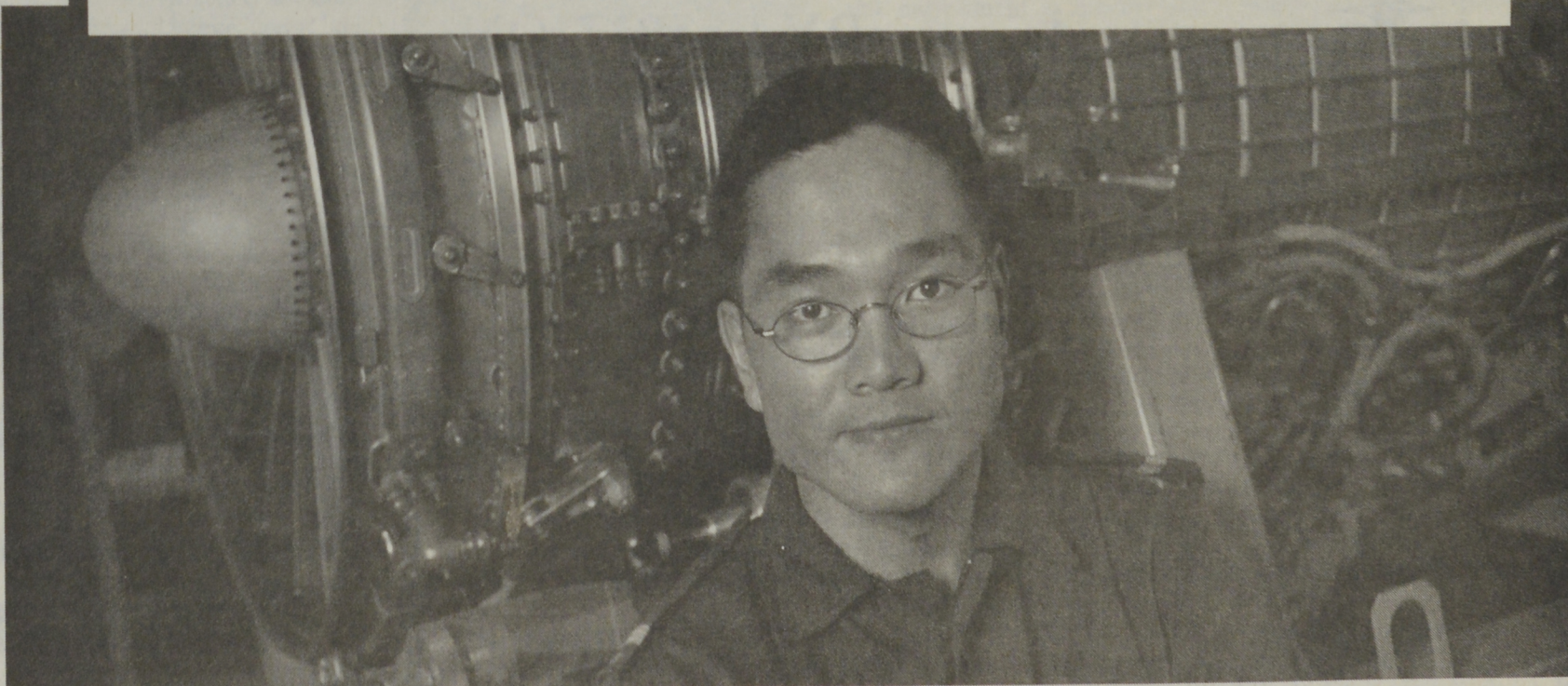
Year two of the campaign features revised versions of the television and print advertisements that are becoming more and more familiar, in addition to a number of other initiatives including newspaper inserts, direct email messaging, a website, information kits, a spokesperson group, speaking tours and the Proudly UNB alumni group.

The advertisements profile seven UNB graduates who are living and working in New Brunswick. They are health care professionals, educators, scientists and researchers. All are individuals who are indeed Making A Significant Difference.

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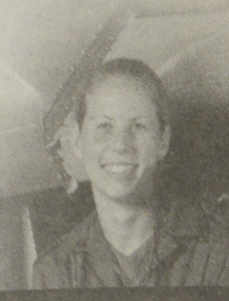
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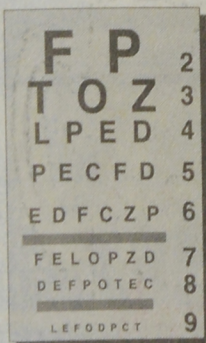
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