

Are drugs wrong?

# A grass roots approach

by Stephen Jones

Whether using hard drugs or soft, abusers do not fully understand the repercussions of their drug involvement, says Sergeant Gary Grant of the RCMP's Drug Awareness Unit.

Grant says drug use is not a victimless crime. "The victims may not be in your back yard, but people are hurt nonetheless."

Grant says illegal drug users have unwittingly supplied their demand and money to the huge North American drug market. It is the money from this industry which ultimately keeps the South American drug cartels and other drug suppliers in business.

It doesn't make sense to Grant when he sees many university students preaching about things like peace or putting an end to unrest in third world countries, but then turn around and use drugs, virtually making themselves sponsors of the killing and the exploitation which make the drug trade possible. "Someone may think they're not hurting anyone by smoking pot in their basement once in a while, but they're

wrong."

The RCMP's Drug Awareness Unit was formed two and a half years ago to educate the public. Grant says his job is to inform people about the destructiveness of illicit drugs so they can decide to take drugs out of their lives. He says scare tactics or any other approach besides education will not stop someone from abusing drugs. Grant believes a drug abuser must be shown the reasons for quitting illicit drugs, but must also have the freedom to choose to stop on his or her own.

Last Thursday night, Grant was a speaker at the last in a series of three drug awareness discussion sessions, held at the North Branch Library in Halifax. The seminars were made possible by the Gottingen Street-based Concerned Citizens Against Drugs. Grant spoke on the hazardous impact drugs have on a person's health, family, and life, and how stability can be maintained in these areas after they have been infiltrated by drugs.

Grant says such groups as CCAD are important for their grass roots approach to the prob-

lem, and because they show that someone involved in drugs can turn their life around to become a productive member of society (Wayne Johnson, CCAD's director, is himself a reformed drug

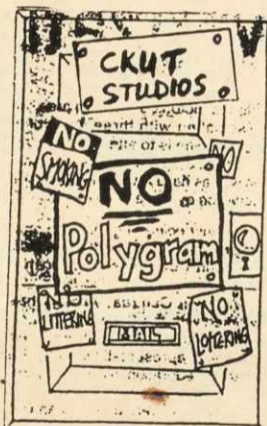
addict.) Grant says drug abuse can only be combated effectively at its different levels by groups such as the CCAD banding together with police drug awareness units and local drug depen-

dency clinics.

Grant says that although the RCMP aims to stem the sale and abuse of all illegal drugs, crack is "a considerable problem in Halifax". To Grant, the biggest danger of crack is its addictiveness, and he says "a person only has to try crack one or two times before it owns their body and soul." Despite this, the RCMP does not turn a blind eye to the marijuana and hashish pushers, who, Grant says, "open the gateway to other drugs" and start people in experimentation. Says Grant, "you don't see too many crack addicts who weren't initially pot or hashish users."

Grant says the changes his department brings about can't be noticed overnight, but "if I didn't think drugs were wrong, that people could live better lives without them, I wouldn't be in this line of work."

"Things are not going to happen quickly, but five years down the road, progress will have been made in changing attitudes about drugs, and will be because of what we are doing today."



## Stations force Polygram's hand

by Andy Riga

MONTREAL (CUP) — Seven weeks after 25 Canadian campus radio stations announced a boycott of Polygram records, the industry giant has decided to eliminate controversial service

fees for some stations.

Members of the National Community Radio Association began the boycott Sept. 1 after the company imposed a \$100 per year fee for supplying promotional records and press releases.

Since last week, Polygram has been contacting individual campus and community stations and offering to send albums and promotional material for free, Polygram official David Freeman said.

He said only stations that "merit" free service are being contacted.

Chris Migone, a boycott organizer and music director at McGill University's CKUT, said the NCRA will probably lift the boycott within two weeks. But he said the group is still concerned that

not all member stations will be serviced for free.

"We're still trying to get a clear answer about which stations they're talking about. We want to make sure all NCRA member stations will be getting free servicing."

Migone said he is pleased Polygram appears to be changing its stance.

"The boycott worked. It's been a bit of a hassle, but it was our last recourse. A lot of energy was spent organizing the boycott that could have been used promoting the artists."

WEA, another major record label, started charging campus stations last year, but backed down after pressure from the NCRA.

Freeman said Polygram is only offering its "alternative repertoire" — including artists such as The Pixies, Michelle Shocked and Siouxsie and the Banshees for free. And only stations that are "responsible" and "merit" free

service will get it, he said.

Polygram decided to contact stations individually because the company was being "misrepresented" by the NCRA, Freeman said. He said Polygram would have waived the fees if stations had contacted the company to explain they couldn't afford them.

"This whole thing has been blown way out of proportion," he said. "Once we realized exactly what was being passed on to NCRA members, we decided to contact individual stations one on one."

"We have approached 15 or 20 stations so far, and the majority have been very positive."

He said he doesn't know whether campus station airplay has any effect on sales.

"It's a very small area to quantify. But the bottom line is for us to expose our repertoire. There is no reason to ignore stations if they are going to meet our objectives."

Migone brushed aside Polygram's complaints about the NCRA, saying the group called the boycott only after months of trying to negotiate with the company.

"What they're saying now is pretty funny. I think they're just upset we got our act together."



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