

# Marijuana reform sponsor wants lesser penalties for pot use

By DARLENE STINSON

Roger Winthrop insists that he is not promoting the use of marijuana — particularly among high school kids.

But Winthrop, who is Michigan coordinator of the National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), also insists that no one should go to jail for smoking it.

The state lobbyist for marijuana law reform spoke to approximately 100 high school students in Plymouth last week.

His discussion with students and Plymouth attorney Robert Delaney was one of several seminars held during Law Week.

WINTHROP IS currently pushing for passage of a bill that would reduce penalties for possessing 30 grams or less of marijuana to a maximum \$100 fine and legalize the use of grass for medicinal purposes.

Marijuana has been found effective in the treatment of glaucoma and in reducing the nauseating side effects of cancer chemotherapy.

The bill would also reduce penalties for possessing 30 grams or more of marijuana to a maximum \$500 fine and 90 days in jail and lower the sentence for selling marijuana from a \$4,000 fine and a four-year jail term to \$1,000 and a one-year jail term.

Sponsored by State Sen. Jerome T. Hart, D-Saginaw, the bill is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Under current state law, possession of a "small quantity" of marijuana is a misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum \$500 fine and one year in jail.

"We've been trying to change the laws for a long time in this state," Winthrop told students. "But our political representatives seem to think if they vote for decriminalization, all their voters will fall out of the tree."

WINTHROP, WHO admits to being a marijuana user, would like to see the use of grass eventually made legal. But he adds that the federal government would have to take the steps to legalize

the substance. A United Nations treaty aimed to stamp out the use of marijuana and other drugs has been signed by the United States and 100 other countries.

So for now, Winthrop is content to lobby for decriminalization of marijuana in Michigan.

"I know people on both floors of the legislature who will go home and smoke marijuana, but they won't vote to decriminalize it," Winthrop charged. He also alleges that current marijuana laws are selectively enforced.

According to Winthrop, 22,000 Michigan residents were arrested for possessing marijuana in 1976. Of those arrested, 25 percent were under the age of 18 and 25 percent were black, he said.

Although many judges dish out \$25 fines to first-time offenders of marijuana laws, Winthrop said that other first-time offenders receive stiff jail sentences.

"IT SEEMS WE'RE marshalling too many cars and too much money for enforcement of marijuana laws," said attorney Delaney, who has represented many persons arrested for pot.

"Marijuana laws are just an attempt to deal with private, personal matters that don't harm others — except for maybe the smell."

Until 1972, possession of marijuana in Michigan was a felony.

"It may be hard for you to believe, but people were sent to jail for long periods of time," Delaney told the students.

Winthrop told the students that no one should smoke marijuana before driving, operating machinery or as a mix with other drugs.

"I suppose there's some potential for abuse of marijuana," he said. "But I will never accept that marijuana is a harmful substance when you stack it up against other legal, commonly-used substances such as alcohol and tobacco."

"Alcohol and other drugs have toxic amounts. Marijuana does not," Winthrop said. "You'd probably have to smoke something like 2½ bales in an hour."

## Off the Walls

By NANCY WALLS SMITH



## I've finally become a soap opera addict

The day I never thought would come has arrived . . . alas and alack, I'm hooked on a soap opera.

After years of looking down my nose at women afflicted by such childishness, I, too, have become an addict. Every day, at 1:00 p.m., you can find me close to the tube, hanging on every word of evil Suzanne, poor Mrs. Foster, or mysterious Jill. My narcotic is called "The Young and the Restless."

It was really insidious the way these mawkish characters crept into my life and ransacked my brain. I religiously watch the "Price is Right" each day, because I love to hear Johnny Olsen yell, "Come on down!" and Bob Barker smoothly handle hysterical women. It's a great show to write by or clean by or to yell at my kids by. Well, that was until last week when the "The Young and the Restless" followed the "Price is Right."

I have always hated soap operas. I considered them repugnant, trite and mundane. The fact that I had never watched one had nothing to do with my opinion of them.

BUT SINCE it is not one of my habits to leap at the television set after each show to change the channel, it happened that I accidentally started watching scenarios between what looked like a bunch of mighty perplexed people. I still wasn't interested because I don't like picking things up in the middle of anything. I couldn't see myself going in cold.

But my downfall came while I was visiting a friend. While we were talking over a cup of spice tea, I happened to look over at her TV set and see the familiar face of one of the show's sufferers. I casually asked, "Just what is that lady's problem, anyway?" Well, I heard

all about that lady. Her name is Jill. I also heard about Vanessa, Mrs. Foster, Derek, Lucas, Lance . . . and their problems. By golly, do they have problems!

Since then I've been on my own, and I'm loving it. Everyday I tune in to find out if Suzanne can convince Katherine that she is crazy so she can win back Derek, and how come everyone but Lance knows that Leslie's baby is his. I still have a long way to go before I have all the characters, their names and their twisted little motives figured out (How come no one likes Jill?), but it's a challenge I'm up to.

YESTERDAY, ONE of the characters asked, "Is there something going on that I don't know about?" I found myself yelling, "I know just how you feel, buddy!"

Even though I am learning to love this particular soap, I still find it irritating when it takes Katherine three and one-half episodes to pick up a knife — her hand twitched for two episodes before she actually lobbed it — and walk over to Mrs. Foster, who was babbling away obliviously, with the intention of stabbing her in the back. Then her phone rang. Naturally she didn't stab her, because nobody stabs anybody when they have to answer the phone. Don't ask me why. That same scene would have taken 3½ minutes on a regular TV show. These people move slower than I do!

My favorite scene so far was when I saw two very macho guys sitting in a bar discussing one of their mothers. One guy says, "I just can't figure out why your mother is acting so strangely." The other bunk comes back with, "Do you suppose it could be menopause?" I shrieked, and fell off my couch.

Don't you just love it? I do.



I'm telling Mom  
she has exquisite taste  
with signature sleepings  
from Diane Von Furstenberg

Fashion by night...silk, sensuous, and perhaps just a bit extravagant. But doesn't Mom deserve it? Pajamas with spaghetti-strap, side-slit camisole top and tulip-hem slim pants, \$23. Camisole-strap short gown with slit petal hem, \$19. Shawl-collared short wrap coat, \$27. All in sand-colored nylon tricot with pale turquoise piping and embroidered designer initials. Sizes S-M-L. From New Reflections Intimate Apparel, at Northland, Pontiac, Westland, Oakland and Twelve Oaks only.

hudson's  
tell mom she's special on may 13

## Have kids' vision tested May 16

Free vision screening for pre-school youngsters is available at the Oakland County health department on Wednesday, May 16 from 9-11 a.m.

The screening will be conducted at the department's main office at 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, in the County Service Center. No appointment is necessary.