

A publication of the NORML Foundation

NM Governor Gary Johnson Heads Speaker List For NORML 2001 Conference

The NORML Foundation is pleased to announce that New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson (R) will be heading a list of prominent officials addressing the NORML 2001 Conference in Washington, DC, scheduled for April 19-21, 2001. The conference, entitled "4:20, A Celebration of Personal Freedom," will be held at the Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel.



New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson (R)

Gov. Johnson, who has been a vocal advocate for ending the drug war and legalizing marijuana, will be the luncheon speaker on Thursday, April 19.

Other featured speakers include Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), the principal Congressional

ing some traction with the American public," said NORML Executive Director Keith Stroup.

sponsor of a federal medical use bill; San Francisco District Attorney Terence Hallinan; and ACLU Executive Director Ira Glasser, who will deliver the keynote speech on Thursday morning.

"The fact that these prominent elected officials will be appearing at the NORML conference is another sign that the position we espouse is finally gain-

"Our opponents can no longer control the public debate by claiming those on our side of the issue are out of the mainstream. More and more public officials are finding the courage to challenge current policies, and political leaders such as Gov. Johnson, Rep. Frank and D.A. Hallinan are showing them the way."

Stroup says the underlying premise of the conference is "we should stop arresting responsible marijuana smokers." Throughout the 3-day conference, panels will address topics such as the medical use of marijuana; drug laws, civil liberties and discrimination; the courts and marijuana policy; a rational harm reduction policy regarding kids and marijuana; state voter initiatives; developments in Europe and

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FCC Rules In Favor Of NORML; Networks Should Have Identified ONDCP Sponsorship

In response to a complaint filed by the NORML Foundation, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruled on Dec. 22 that five major networks should have identified the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) as a sponsor of television programs embedded with anti-drug messages after receiving government dollars for doing so.

The NORML Foundation filed the complaint with the FCC on Feb. 17, 2000 alleging that the ONDCP's practice of offering millions of additional advertising dollars for network programs that included anti-drug messages was in violation of the federal anti-payola statute. The FCC agreed, stating, "listeners and

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Who, Other Than The Government, Funds America's 'War On Some Drugs?'

The NORML Foundation recently released a report which identifies some of private companies, foundations and individuals who donate large amounts of money to perpetuate the failed war on marijuana smokers.

The report examines private donations to so-called "anti-drug" groups, ranging from DARE to the Partnership for a Drug Free America (PDFA) to the Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse (CASA).

The report was inspired by Drug Czar General McCaffrey's constant, four-year refrain that drug law reform groups (principally NORML, The Lindesmith Center and the Drug Policy Foundation) are awash in funding and are greatly outspending prohibitionists. This obvious exaggeration by McCaffrey, oft repeated by anti-drug groups, is easily refuted by a basic financial review

of the organizations' Internal Revenue Service returns.

For the last 15 years, so-called anti-drug organizations have received funding far greater than that received by reform organizations. More importantly, many of the prohibitionist donors have an economic interest in upholding the status quo.

Further, ONDCP's Gen. McCaffrey and other prohibitionists consistently ask and receive more and more annual funding from Congress—the ONDCP's FY 2001 budget exceeds \$20 billion. However, as the new report indicates, an increase in spending does not translate into a reduction of drug use in government surveys.

Drug use charts, organizational spending data, pro-drug war donor chart and more are found in the 'What's New' section of www.norml.org.

Below is the 1997 corporate list of donors and how much they donated to the Partnership for a Drug Free America. Funding for other so-called anti-drug groups such as Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) can be found in the report located at www.norml.org/facts/Bigdollarreport/bigdollar.shtml.

Partnership for a Drug Free America

BankAmerica Foundation (For program support.)	\$25,000.00
Bristol-Meyers Squibb Foundation, Inc.	\$50,000.00
Citicorp Foundation	\$10,000.00
DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund	\$30,000.00
GE Fund	\$25,000.00
General Motors Foundation, Inc.	\$25,000.00
Hallmark Corporate Foundation	\$10,000.00
Hearst Foundation	\$50,000.00
H.J. Heinz Company Foundation	\$50,000.00
Joseph Drown Foundation	\$50,000.00
Kimberly-Clark Foundation	\$25,000.00
The Merck Company Foundation	\$25,000.00
Ford Motor Company Fund	\$25,000.00
Procter & Gamble Fund	\$50,000.00
Rockwell International Corporation Trust	\$10,000.00
SC Johnson Wax Fund, Inc.	\$60,000.00
The Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation, Inc.	\$10,000.00
Schering-Plough Foundation, Inc.	\$35,000.00
Wal-Mart Foundation	\$10,000.00
Other donations	\$3,499,845.00
Total	\$4,074,845.00



JUDICIAL WATCH

U.S. Supreme Court To Hear Medical Necessity Case

NORML to File Amicus Brief

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review a decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals which may determine the viability of the “medical necessity” defense under federal law. A decision is expected later in this term of the court.

The case began in January 1998 when the federal government filed a civil lawsuit seeking to enjoin several northern California patients’ cooperatives from providing marijuana to seriously ill patients who qualify for the medical use of marijuana under state law. District Court Judge Charles Breyer initially issued the injunction to close the cooperatives.

In September 1999, in an appeal brought by the Oakland Cannabis Buyers’ Cooperative, the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that Judge Breyer should consider a modification to his injunction, to permit the cooperatives to distribute marijuana to those patients who qualify for a “medical necessity” defense, and outlined the criteria for patients to qualify.

This past July, Breyer modified the injunction to permit the cooperatives to provide marijuana to patients who qualify for the medical necessity defense.

The U.S. Department of Justice immediately requested an emergency order to stay the July ruling by Judge Breyer. The emergency order was denied by the 9th Circuit, but in August, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-1 to prohibit cannabis distribution by the OCBC while the case is on appeal.

In requesting that the Supreme Court accept this appeal, the Justice Department argued that the common law defense of medical necessity had been eliminated for marijuana

when Congress placed marijuana in Schedule I of the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970, a schedule defined in the statute for drugs with no accepted medical use.

“We have faith, when the Supreme Court considers this case on the merits, that it will consider the needs of the patients who are suffering,” said Jeff Jones, executive director of the OCBC.

“This is an opportunity for the High Court to clarify federal law regarding the medical necessity defense,” said NORML Executive Director

Keith Stroup. “We are hopeful the court will confirm that the 9th Circuit ruling is in fact the law of the land. Surely federal law must recognize the right of seriously ill patients to use marijuana, if recommended by a

physician, when other medications are ineffective.”

NORML Legal Committee member John Wesley Hall, Esq., of Little Rock, AR, is coordinating the drafting of an *amicus curiae* brief which NORML will be filing in support of the OCBC position.

“SURELY FEDERAL LAW MUST RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF SERIOUSLY ILL PATIENTS TO USE MARIJUANA, IF RECOMMENDED BY A PHYSICIAN, WHEN OTHER MEDICATIONS ARE INEFFECTIVE.”

NORML 2001 CONFERENCE

4.20

APRIL 19-21, 2001
RENAISSANCE HOTEL
999 9TH ST NW
WASHINGTON, DC

a celebration of

PERSONAL FREEDOM

election 2000 RECAP

Medical Marijuana Initiatives Pass In Colorado and Nevada

Californians Pass Initiative To Keep Non-Violent Drug Offenders Out Of Jail

A number of marijuana-related initiatives were approved in this past November's general election, including two medical marijuana initiatives, two measures reforming asset forfeiture and one keeping non-violent drug offenders out of prison.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA INITIATIVES

Medical marijuana initiatives passed decisively in Colorado and Nevada, boosting the number of states where patients can use marijuana for medical use to nine.

In Nevada, 67 percent of the voters said yes to Question 9, legalizing the medical use of marijuana. Two years ago voters approved the initiative with 59 percent approval. Since Question 9 is a constitutional amendment, it needed voter approval in two consecutive elections. While the initiative did not limit the legal amount of marijuana a patient can possess, patients will need to register with the state in order to be protected by the state law.

Fifty-four percent of the voters in Colorado approved Amendment 20, which, like the Nevada initiative, permits patients suffering from cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis and chronic nervous system disorders to use marijuana with the recommendation of a physician. Patients in Colorado will be allowed to possess up to two ounces of marijuana or cultivate six plants.

SENTENCING REFORM

California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 36, the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, with 60.8 percent of the vote. This measure requires first and second-time non-violent drug offenders to enter drug treatment programs, and eliminates the threat of jail.

"This is a 180-degree change in our drug policy. It's revolutionary," said Dave Fratello, the campaign manager for Proposition 36. "California has a reputation as a tough-on-crime state, and now I think we're showing we can be smart on crime too."

The initiative is expected to keep 25,000 non-violent drug offenders out of prison each year, saving the state of California \$125 million in annual prison costs and \$475 million in new prison construction.

ASSET FORFEITURE REFORM

Asset forfeiture reform initiatives were passed in Oregon and Utah but the version in Massachusetts was narrowly defeated.

The Oregon Property Protection Act (Measure 3), which passed with 66 percent of the vote, reforms current civil asset forfeiture laws by requiring a criminal conviction before authorities can seize property. All forfeiture proceeds will go to drug treatment programs instead of law enforcement.

Utah's Initiative B, the Utah Property Protection Act, passed with 69 percent of the vote. The Utah initiative also requires a criminal conviction before authorities can seize property, but all forfeiture proceeds will go the Utah Uniform School Fund.

"I thought the issue was pretty simple and I think people understand that they deserve to have their property protected," said Janet Jenson, lead spokesperson for Utahns for Property Protection. "I didn't think you could get 70 percent of people to agree on vanilla ice cream."

Paradoxically, a similarly worded measure in Massachusetts, Question 8, was defeated 53 to 47 percent. As well as reforming asset forfeiture laws, the Massachusetts initiative would have eliminated jail penalties for most non-violent drug offenders.

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Ballot Measure No. 5 in Alaska, fully legalizing marijuana and eliminating the penalties for possession, use, cultivation and sale, was defeated by a vote of 60.8 percent against and 39.2 in favor. Had the initiative been approved, all non-violent marijuana offenders who are currently incarcerated would have been released from jail. It is likely a softer version of this initiative will be presented for the 2002 election.

LOCAL INITIATIVES AND POLICY QUESTIONS

Measure G in Mendocino County, CA, allowing citizens to grow up to 25 marijuana plants for personal use, passed with 58.3 percent of the vote. The initiative instructs the district attorney's office to make marijuana enforcement their lowest priority.

"The decisive outcome should send the message we were hoping for," said former Congressman Dan Hamburg, who helped campaign for the initiative. "The People have demanded that the focus of lawmakers and law enforcement shift to hard, dangerous drugs and not an illicit weed that's been around for centuries."

Voters in Massachusetts passed a number of public policy questions which call for state representatives to support medical marijuana and marijuana decriminalization legislation at the state capitol.

An advisory decriminalization of marijuana question passed in the Fourth Essex Representative District (64 percent), the Second Middlesex Senatorial District (65 percent) and the Sixth Middlesex Representative District (68 percent). The initiative instructs elected officials to lobby the state legislature to make possession of marijuana a civil violation (with a \$100 fine) as opposed to a criminal offense.

A medical marijuana question passed in the Fourth Barnstable Representative District with 63 percent support.

NM Drug Advisory Group Recommends Decriminalization Of Marijuana For Personal Use; Legal Medical Use

The current “war on drugs” is a failure and current drug laws should focus on prevention, as opposed to incarceration. That was the conclusion of New Mexico’s Drug Policy Advisory Group as they presented their findings to Governor Gary Johnson on January 4th.

After reviewing the report Governor Johnson announced that his administration would draft eight bills that deal with changing the state’s drug policies, including decriminalizing marijuana for personal use and allowing for the medical use of marijuana in the state.

“I am calling for a big change in strategy in New Mexico,” Johnson said. “Are we really out to save lives, or are we out to continue to arrest and incarcerate this country? We need to work harder to save people’s lives rather than locking them up.”

DECriminalIZATION

The advisory group, appointed by the governor last May, called for the end of criminal sanctions for the possession of less than an ounce of marijuana by anyone over 18 years old. Those who smoke marijuana in public would still face a civil fine.

The advisory group explained in the report, “Having reviewed carefully the information available on marijuana and its effects, and having heard from various representatives of law enforcement, corrections and the courts, we believe that taking this step will result in greater availability of resources to respond to more serious crimes without any increased risks to public safety.”

MEDICAL USE

The committee also endorsed the medical use of marijuana, by seriously ill patients, and recommended the legislature revise the “Lynn Pierson Act,” a long dormant New Mexico medical marijuana law originally enacted in 1978 that allowed for the medical use of marijuana in research settings. “We recom-

mend that the Lynn Pierson Act be amended to allow physicians to recommend and patients to access medical marijuana when medically appropriate, and to allow for a registry of patients who are approved for this treatment and their caregivers,” wrote the committee.

“We applaud the advisory group for their two specific recommendations regarding marijuana policy,” said Keith Stroup, NORML Executive Director. “First, they recognize the importance of permitting the medical use of marijuana. Nine states currently permit seriously ill patients to use marijuana if their physician recommends it to relieve pain and suffering. It would be unconscionable to continue to deny an effective medication to those who need it.”

Stroup continued, “Second, The Governor’s Drug Policy Advisory Group joins a long list of prestigious commissions and study groups that have reached the conclusion that we should stop arresting responsible marijuana smokers, including the National Commission on Marijuana Use and Drug Abuse [the Shafer Commission] (1972) in this country, the LeDain Commission (1972) in Canada and the Wooten Report (1968) in England. Millions of mainstream, middle-class Americans smoke marijuana, and most of them are good citizens who work hard, raise families and contribute to their communities. It’s time we stopped treating them like criminals.”

FALSE DRUG INFORMATION

Throughout the report the advisory group denounced the current methods of drug education and the plethora of false information disseminated by federal agencies that help perpetuate the failed “war on drugs.”

“We would like to emphasize an overriding concern that surfaced repeatedly as we examined the information available on these topics,” wrote Advisory Committee Chair Woody

Smith, a retired state judge, in a transmittal letter to the governor. “In our society today, much of our drug policy is based on misleading and even patently false information about illegal drugs, the physical and psychological effects of illegal drugs and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of current drug policies. Even more disturbing, the advisory

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Governor Gary Johnson

group determined that false information frequently comes from sources that we expect to be reliable, including our own federal government. When incorrect information is accepted as true and policies are based upon that false information, the resulting harm experienced by those who suffer from drug addiction and their families, by criminal justice agencies, and by the public is great.”

“We believe that it is our ethical imperative to reject false data and misleading information no matter what the source, and to increase the availability of accurate and meaningful information to all New Mexicans and policy makers.”

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Canadian Government Pays Saskatoon Company \$5.75 Million To Grow Marijuana

Prairie Plant Systems Inc. has been contracted by Health Canada, Canada's healthcare bureaucracy, to become the official supplier of research grade marijuana.

The Canadian government will pay \$5.75 million to the Saskatoon company over five years to grow a ton (2000 pounds) of marijuana. The company will also dry, process and roll over a million marijuana cigarettes.

Prairie Plant Systems Inc. will grow the marijuana 360 meters underground in an unused shaft of a copper and zinc mine in Flin Flon, Manitoba.

"When they asked us about security, we told them that basically it was 360 meters underground and there was only one entrance," said Brent Zettel, president of Prairie Plant Systems Inc. "They didn't quite

believe us...we had to bring them out and show them."

Prairie Plant Systems Inc. will also distribute marijuana to patients authorized by Health Canada to legally use marijuana. The patients will not have to pay for the marijuana, but the patients and their doctors must take part in clinical research to determine the efficacy of cannabis for people suffering from diseases like AIDS and cancer. The clinical trials will begin within the year.

"The contract to grow medical marijuana in Canada is similar to the one currently in place in the U.S. between the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the University of Mississippi/Oxford," said Allen St. Pierre, NORML Foundation Executive Director. "However, Canadian patients and their advocates need to make sure that the Canadian program is an expansive one, rather than the U.S. model that only provides legal marijuana to eight patients."

NORML/MAPS Study Shows Vaporizers Reduce Toxins In Marijuana Smoke

San Francisco, CA: Medical marijuana patients may be able to protect themselves from harmful toxins in marijuana smoke by inhaling their medicine using an electric vaporizer, according to initial results of a study by California NORML and Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS).

The study showed that it is possible to vaporize medically active tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) by heating marijuana to a temperature short of the point of combustion, thereby eliminating or substantially reducing potentially harmful smoke toxins that are normally present in marijuana smoke. Vaporizers may therefore substantially reduce what is widely regarded as the leading health concern associated with marijuana, namely respiratory harm due to smoking.

NORML and MAPS sponsored the study in the hopes of helping medical marijuana patients and others reduce the health risks

of smoking marijuana. A major obstacle to approval of natural cannabis by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in its 1999 report, "Marijuana and Medicine," was that smoking is an unhealthy delivery method. The IOM report failed to note the possibility of vaporization.

The NORML-MAPS study tested a device called the M1 Volatizer®, an aromatherapy vaporizer developed by Alternative Delivery Systems, Inc. It consisted of an electric heating element in a chamber that radiates heat downwards over a sample of marijuana contained in a standard bowl. Output from the vaporizer was analyzed and compared to smoke produced by burning the sample.

The vaporizer produced THC at a temperature of 185°C. (365°F.) while completely eliminating three measured toxins - benzene, a known carcinogen, plus toluene and naphthalene. Carbon monoxide and smoke tars were

both qualitatively reduced by the vaporizer, but additional testing is needed to quantify the extent of the decrease.

The vaporizer study was undertaken as a follow-up to a previous NORML-MAPS marijuana smoking device study, which concluded that vaporizers offered the best prospects for smoke harm reduction: www.maps.org/newsletters/v06n3/06359mj1.html

"Many medical marijuana patients say they prefer vaporizers because they deliver smoother, less irritating medication," said Dale Gieringer, NORML California State Coordinator.

NORML and MAPS are currently seeking support for further research and development of vaporizers. Research is presently underway to explore the optimal temperature and conditions for vaporization. An additional \$85,000 is needed to provide accurate measurement of carbon monoxide and other toxins, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Further studies may be needed to explore alternative device designs and the effects of different marijuana sample consistency, potency and preparation.

NM Governor Gary Johnson Heads Speaker List For NORML 2001 Conference

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Canada; and new strategies to respond to emerging opportunities.

NORML has scheduled this conference to coincide with “4/20,” the date that has become associated in the popular culture as a special day for marijuana smokers — sort of what “It’s Miller time” has become to beer drinkers. “We hope to build on that tradition and encourage reform supporters to join us

in Washington, DC as a way to celebrate 4/20,” Stroup added.

Social events include a High Times/NORML opening reception on Thursday evening, with a silent art auction and special awards presentation; and a special High Times 4/20 Celebration to benefit NORML on Friday evening.

The annual NORML conference is open to all who support reforming marijuana policy. It provides an exceptional opportunity to meet and network with allies from across the country and prepare for the year ahead. For additional details and online registration, visit the NORML web site at www.norml.org.

NM Drug Advisory Group Recommends Decriminalization Of Marijuana For Personal Use; Legal Medical Use

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FOCUS ON VIOLENT CRIME

The committee further recommended amending existing criminal statutes to reduce first and second drug possession offenses to misdemeanors with automatic probation and substance abuse treatment rather than jail time; and the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders.

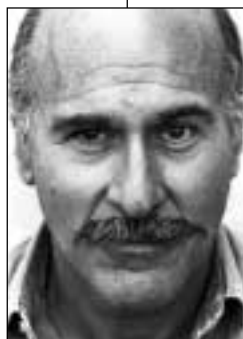
The report said, “New Mexico should begin immediately to place first priority on enforcement of laws prohibiting violent crimes, followed by enforcement of laws prohibiting property crimes. When law enforcement officers are given the impossible task of stopping all drug use and all drug buying and selling, they are less able to enforce laws intended to protect communities from crimes such as assault, rape and murder. A reallocation of resources that prioritizes prevention, investigation and enforcement of these violent crimes over drug crimes would better serve and protect the citizens of New Mexico, would improve morale within the ranks of law enforcement and would increase public support and respect for the hard work that law enforcement, courts and correctional officers do every day.”

The implementation of effective prevention and science-based drug education; effective treatment programs covered by Medicaid; and harm reduction policies and programs were also recommended by the committee.

“This is a thoughtful report which makes a convincing case for a harm reduction approach that relies on education, prevention and treatment over prison and other punitive approaches,” Stroup said. “They have provided a useful blueprint for a more effective and humane drug policy for the state. It’s now time for the New Mexico legislature to move forward with a review and overhaul of their marijuana laws.”



Rep. Barney Frank



Ira Glasser



Terence Hallinan

FCC Rules In Favor Of NORML; Networks Should Have Identified ONDCP Sponsorship

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viewers are entitled to know by whom they are being persuaded.”

The networks were not fined by the FCC, but were put on notice. The FCC wrote in its decision, “sponsorship identification is required and we caution the networks to do so in the future.”

The ONDCP’s involvement with the networks was revealed by journalist Dan Forbes of Salon.com almost a year ago. Through a se-

ries of congressional hearings it was revealed that over a two-year span the networks received a total of \$25 million in tax dollars for including anti-drug messages in scripts, which drew the ire of members of Congress and First Amendment activists.

“This was a sinister attempt by the drug czar to secretly alter program content by offering millions of dollars to those willing to use the programs for government propaganda,” said Allen St. Pierre, NORML Foundation Executive Director. “This FCC ruling clearly puts the incoming drug czar and the networks on notice that this is a violation of federal law and will no longer be tolerated.”

To view NORML’s initial complaint and network responses, please visit www.norml.org/news/fcc_complaint/index.shtml.

U.S. Drug War Refugee Seeks Support From Fellow Americans

It has all the elements of a Hollywood movie thriller. A dying famous author, a mansion in Bel Air, CA with 4,000 marijuana plants, even an escape to another country by an innocent young woman. But it's very real, and the story is already rife with tragedy. Canadian justices will rule in the coming year whether to return Renee Boje to America to face a mandatory 10-year prison sentence for being present at a medical marijuana grow operation, or whether to grant her political asylum in response to the severity of America's cannabis laws. She fled the U.S. in 1998, at the advice of her lawyer.

Renee Boje is asking her fellow American citizens to urge Canada to grant her petition for refugee status. Actor Woody Harrelson recently wrote to the Canadian courts about Boje: "Please, please, show some compassion for Renee, and don't allow her to become another statistic in a money making hypocritical war against good citizens". He went on to call her a "wonderful lady, who has never been violent or hurt anyone, (and) who simply believed what was going on in that house in Bel Air was legal."

Boje was a hired professional freelance artist in 1997 when she met Todd McCormick, who has suffered bone cancer and radiation treatments since he was a child. McCormick had hired Boje to do artwork for a book on medical marijuana he was writing with his publisher, the late author Peter McWilliams ("Life 101", "Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do").

McWilliams, also a patient, was suffering from full-blown AIDS and cancer. He and McCormick had converted a mansion into a cannabis research lab. They claimed they were doing clinical research testing strains of pot for effectiveness in treating the symptoms of dis-

eases including AIDS, cancer, and chronic pain. They assumed they were protected by California's Proposition 215, which was approved by California voters in 1996, and allows medical marijuana patients to cultivate marijuana for medical use. But a federal judge ruled out any mention of medical necessity in the case, so jurors couldn't be told that



Renee Boje, freelance artist.
Photo courtesy of Cannabis Culture.

McWilliams and McCormick were seriously ill.

Boje is charged with watering and moving some plants. She admits she had knowledge of the operation, but denies assisting in it, and like McCormick and McWilliams, thought it was protected by Prop. 215. However, U.S. federal authorities that snagged her leaving the residence as they were starting a raid on the home claim she made a statement admitting guilt. She says that just isn't true. She is facing a staggering 10-year mandatory sentence in federal prison. Amnesty International decries violence that women are subjected to endure in her would-be prison as the worst in America.

McWilliams was denied his use of marijuana as an herbal appetite stimulant by U.S. District Judge George King, and died before his sentencing while choking on his own vomit in his bathroom. But not before Boje made a cou-

rageous offer to turn herself in if the charges were dropped against the dying McWilliams. Bone cancer and chronic pain patient McCormick is serving a mandatory five-year prison sentence at aptly named Terminal Island Federal Correctional Institute. Now Boje is a refugee from her country, and has been branded a dangerous criminal by U.S. authorities. Time is running out for her.

Canadian appeals lawyer and long-time NORML Legal Committee Member John Conroy (www.johnconroy.com) says that support from fellow Americans, and more importantly, the American media, is what Boje will need if she

is to persuade Canadian authorities to deliver her a victory in this precedent setting case. Boje, who has given over 300 print, radio and television interviews in Canada, is now asking the American media and public to participate in her call for justice. Washington State NORML Director Vivian McPeak calls her case, "a bellwether poster-child example of the cruelty of America's war on cannabis."

Boje spent this past holiday season with her new friends and family in Canada. Supporters pledge to keep her out of an American prison when next year's holiday season comes.

They are urging her fellow U.S. citizens to write, e-mail, and fax the Canadian government in support of her bid for political asylum.

She considers the cannabis plant "a healing herb", and can't understand how her own government can incarcerate sick and dying people in its jails and prisons because of it. Her goal is to stay in Canada, where she wants to open a holistic healing center. She sells her art in cards and certificates to help raise money for her defense. For the meantime she will live in exile, uncertain of what the future may bring.

For more information on Renee Boje's story, visit her web site at www.reneeboje.com. Financial contributions and letters to the Canadian government in her support can be sent to the Renee Boje Legal Defense Fund, P.O. Box 1557, Gibsons, B.C., Canada, V0N 1V0