

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

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Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXIX, Number 90, 20 September 1995 — Marijuana advocate praises drug's medicinal uses  
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## Marijuana advocate praises drug's medicinal uses

By **VERONICA LEI**

*Contributing Writer*

Johann Moore, coordinator of the New York Medical Marijuana Buyers' Club, spoke about the need for terminally and chronically ill AIDS patients to have access to marijuana in a speech held last night in Hamilton Hall.

The Buyer's Club illegally buys marijuana for such patients after they have presented documentation that they are seriously ill.

Moore said daily use of the drug helps people with AIDS regain weight by increasing their appetites, while encouraging the body to absorb important nutrients.

"This [selling marijuana directly to the chronically ill] is a direct action we're doing in order to save people's lives," he said. "People with AIDS tend to starve to death ... the body can't absorb nutrients anymore. [Marijuana] helps people feel better. It helps people stay alive."

Moore said marijuana aided in his fight against his own chronic fatigue and weight-loss problems.

Moore also emphasized the need for study of the long-term affects of daily marijuana use.

While there has not yet been a long-term, scientific study of how marijuana assists the chronically ill regain part of their health, Moore said that use of the drug reduces malabsorption and the severity of

gastral-intestinal problems.

He also views use of the drug as a “regularizer” for both body and mind.

“I talk about it [smoking a joint] as being a moment of grace every-day. It’s a moment during which I gain understanding. It’s a moment in there where I can sort of rise up above [the pain] and say, ‘Oh, I see, I understand. I can get through ’til tomorrow where I can do this again.’”

Moore spoke briefly about his recent arrest in the East Village for possession of the drug. The incident was covered in the Sept. 10 edition of *The New York Times*.

Buyers’ Club members were unable to access a room where they had planned to distribute marijuana. So, members decided simply to distribute the drug on the street.

“It seemed like a good idea at the time,” Moore said.

Police watched the group’s activities for a while, eventually arresting Moore and several others.

Moore said he was appalled at the treatment of his HIV-positive colleagues while they were in police custody. He claimed that the conditions at the police station were inadequate for the fatally ill, in that there was no place for them to rest and they feared exposure to tuberculosis (TB).

“It’s not okay for people with compromised immune systems to

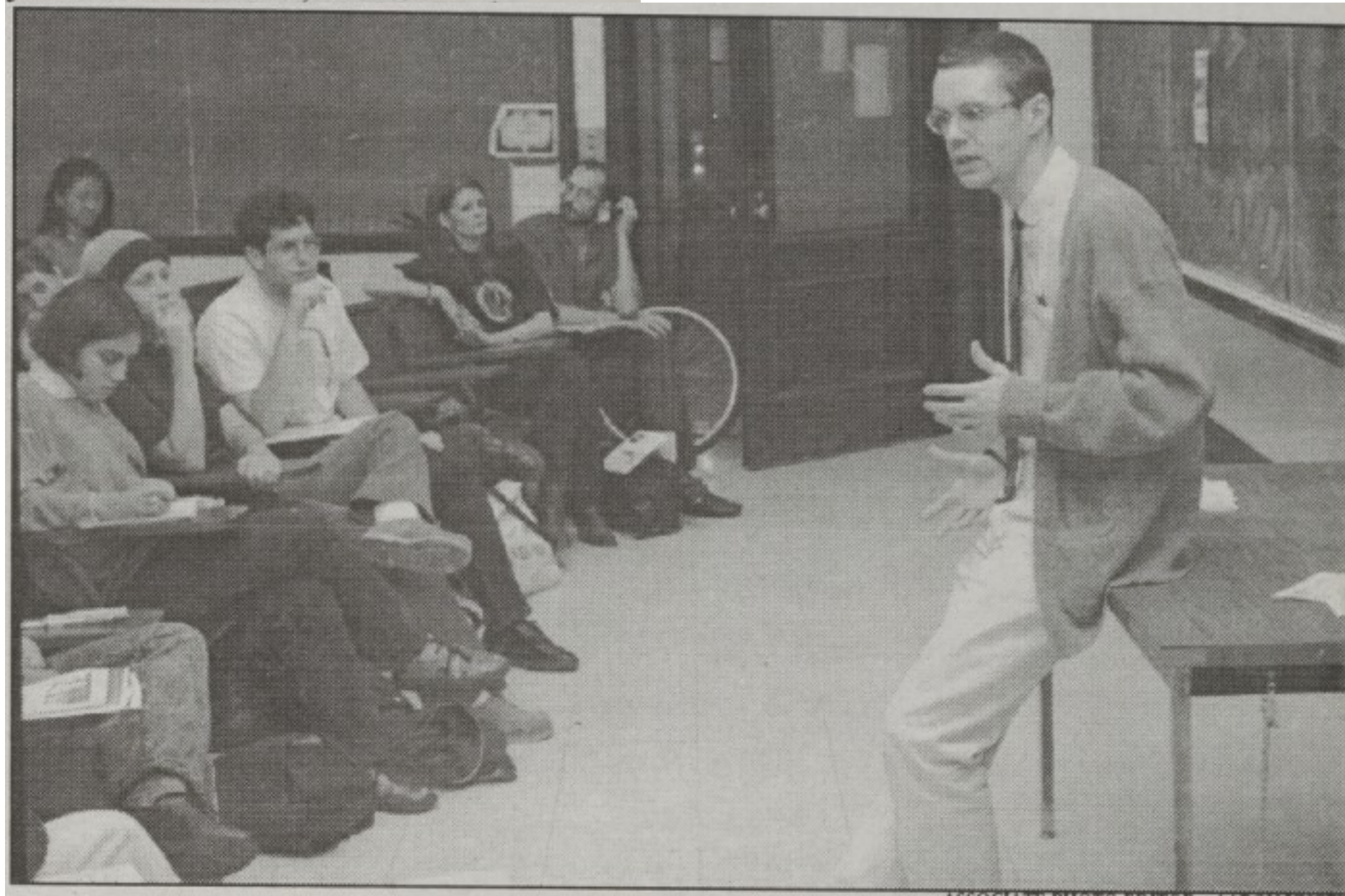
be going through central booking, to be going through the system, to be spending five in the evening 'til 11 the next morning in jail where there's TB," he said.

The lecture was co-sponsored by the Columbia University chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (CUNORML) and Columbia University Harm Reduction Education Sessions (CUHRES).

"I support him fully," said Steven Lin, SEAS '98, co-chair of CUNORML. "What [Moore] is doing is morally correct. We can't just ignore the problem anymore. We have to take care of these people and the government's not going to do it. It's up to the people themselves."

Most students who came to the lecture were attracted by the topic or wanted to find out more about marijuana itself.

"There's a lot of questions I've had about what really should be logical as far as marijuana laws go and what's realistic as far as people using it and not using it," said Juliana LaBonte, CC '98.



ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR—AARON UNGER

Johann Moore, coordinator of the New York Medical Marijuana Buyers' Club, addressed a crowd last night in Hamilton Hall on the medicinal benefits of the drug.