

# CAPITAL report

*Five capital agents reporting from five capital capitols.*

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Recently crowned the best city in the world to smoke pot, Vancouver has a few annoyances to filter out before taking on such a prestigious honor.

Reefer versus government is a battle that rages on in this affluence of outdoor bliss. Recent studies have shown that the illicit growth of marijuana in and around Vancouver has skyrocketed 222 per cent since 1997. In such a heavily resourced based economy you begin to wonder why instead of trying to curb the growth of morcheeba, that the government doesn't begin to legislate it. It's no secret that B.C.'s economy is one of the poorest in the country, and adding wealth to an economy that lumbers around like a feeble dinosaur couldn't be a detriment.

During the last seven years police have seized 1.2 million plants and 8,646 kilograms of harvested marijuana, with an estimated value of between \$462 million and \$1.25 billion. The study, conducted by Darryl Plecas, a criminologist at the University College of Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, sounded off an array of figures that probably came as more surprise to the rest of the country than it did here in B.C.

If the figures above weren't enough to convince B.C.'s aristocracy, then perhaps the 508 ads for hydroponic equipment listed in the in the 2000-2001 B.C. Yellow Pages could serve as armament in the quest to legalize marijuana. According to Plecas that's, "50 times as many as Washington state and 30 times as many as Alberta."

Economies move forward under the pretense that where there is supply, you can create a demand. Culturally speaking a city like Vancouver basks in its natural wonders, feeding the appetites of beauty seekers and outdoor enthusiasts while generating revenue in a thriving tourism industry.

Vancouver, much like Toronto, is a nesting ground for film, television and music, and most of these creatively based enterprises employ people who sometimes indulge on "B.C. weed." The growing and cultivation of marijuana is a sub-economy that's so efficient that it's no wonder that figures listed in the millions continued to grow. Entities like the B.C. Marijuana Party remain active with, "Leave all your anger, but bring your best buds," as this year's slogan for Cannabis Day on July 1. Lead by Marc Emery, who is a mayoral candidate, citizens were invited out to partake on a vision that seems inherently retrograde.

The quest to legalize and legislate marijuana will continue to churn out debates until significant milestones can be made. With cities like Amsterdam piquing the interest of travelers, it's no wonder that natives to British Columbia will likely continue to cosset the world's proclamation.



## HOLY FUCK I AM IN MONTREAL

Ok, now that's off my chest, and I can reflect upon the whirlwind that the past two weeks have been, moving from the wet, West, and Left Coast to the Franglais Frog Capital of Montreal, I barely know what to even talk about. Let's start with the basics.

Where the fuck are the bagels? —In Outreaumont.

Where the fuck is the weed? —Couriers.

Where the fuck is the fucking? —L'Oratoire St. Joseph.

L'Oratoire St. Joseph is a giant nipple atop one of the hills off to the southwest of "Mont" Royal. It's a cement nipple, with a billion steps heading up to the top. The steps are divided into three parts: cement on the sides and wood in the middle, so the Catholics can walk up on their knees, praying at every step. I can't figure out if the wonderful feeling I get when I skip and jump up the same steps for exercise means I am going to Hell, or if my body is just overjoyed at the fact that I am moving at any rapid speed in a city covered primarily in cement and trampled cheese-curds.

The Mutek Crowd—I was at Mutek 2001 and didn't fully notice it at the time. Perhaps it was the hash, perhaps it was because I was too engrossed in getting off to Brinkman and Villalobos and Herbert and everyone else because I had flown specifically in from Vancouver to enjoy myself. But now that I live here and have gone to Micro Mutek 5 featuring Scion + Tikiman LIVE, my mind is reeling with the implications of it all: PIBs, People In Black, what in Toronto they call

"The Beautiful People," all standing around in either their retro-'80s trend-heavy so-ironic clothing and big hair or their black-on-black trend-heavy so-pretentious wardrobe and black glasses. —I've got black glasses.

But dammit, I was getting down to Tikiman. Scott (Deadbeat) was going apeshit beside me; Marc LeClair (Akufen) was busting a little groove, Jon Berry (North American Mille Plateaux Guy) was getting all monkey—even Mike Shannon (Remote Agency) was wiggling. But not "the crowd." Oh no, all the DJs were dancing, all the producers—generally, all the people who are usually too pretentious to dance were showing everyone how to dance. But all the Cool People were not dancing. The Cool People are Cool because they drop \$20 to attend a world-class electronic event and then gossip on their phone right in front of the stage about how their boyfriend disapproves of their new g-string.

So what am I getting at?

Montreal is great. I am sure I am going to find out more and more about this city and its wild times. People sure do drink a lot and everyone is social and visits everyone else non-stop on the Plateau. I like that. But in Vancouver, everyone is lacking in pretentiousness at the techno events because they are still incredibly new, fresh, and unstructured. In Montreal, Mutek competes to become yet another institutionalized festival—like Jazz Fest, the FCMM, and Victoriaville. And along with that kind of structure comes the PIBs and the pretentiousness and an ignorance coupled with money and a big, shitty blackhole that just sucks all the energy out of the party.



*In the dead of summer, two Torontonians debate the darts and laurels of city living. Does the Toronto of 2002 offer a culturally kick-ass summer? Or does a hellish heat wave, coupled with the largest municipal strike in Canadian history, turn Toronto into the asshole of the universe?*

'Ho there. What say you and me head down to Queen West for a brewsky—' 'Are you crazy? In the middle of the worst heat wave this city's ever seen? Think I'd rather strip naked and curl up beside the air conditioner.'

'So, it's a tad toasty. I say we turn that frown upside down by going outside and—'

'Doing what? Thanks to the largest municipal strike in Canadian history, everything's closed! Parks, swimming pools, tennis courts, sports fields, summer camps, museums, galleries, Toronto Islands—everything.'

'What about just breathing in some good ole fresh air?'

'There isn't any—what with garbage workers on strike. Look at Chinatown—it's a sea of trash.'

'Now, now. The stench is slight and the summer festivities are in full swing. Gay Pride Parade carried on, as did the Jazz Festivals and the International Toronto Fringe, which by the way featured 117 shows in nine venues over 12 days.'

'First off, Toronto's Jazz Festivals are second-rate versions of Montreal's. And don't start up with the Fringe. Fringe is a euphemism for 'amateur night.'

'Toronto also has one of the largest theatre industries in the world.'

'Yeah, well, sports and movies are my raison d'être. But with the Leafs and Raptors in off-season, all that's left are the pathetic Jays and Argos. And all the good movies are released in December.'

'What about the wonderful repertory cinemas playing a wide range of independent films? And come September, we can check out the Toronto International Film Festival—one of the world's most respected film festivals.'

'The Film Festival attracts little more than a bunch of pretentious, self-congratulatory art movies. As for the decent films, they sell out before you can say 'Atom Egoyan.' Face it: Summer 2002 in the city of Toronto is a total failure...'

The cynic's bickering is momentarily drowned out by a symphony of horns.

'Brazilians! Don't they know the World Cup ended weeks ago?'

'And what about the World Cup, which proved to be more than a spectacle of grown men kicking around a slab of animal hide? Where else, but in this proud cultural mosaic, would you find the inhabitants waving flags from 32 countries? It was an awesome celebration of Toronto's cultural diversity.'

'It was an awesome denigration of my right to sleep without a bunch of football hooligans honking and plonking from dusk till dawn till dusk!'

A knock on the door. The cynic answers. It's the Pope.

'John-Paul! I forgot you were coming to town! Bless me father, for I have sinned by defaming Toronto. It is indeed a great city. Give me my penance.'

'A small favour: You must carry the cross in the re-enactment of the Passion Play in the up-and-coming World Youth Day parade.'

'Amen.'