

# Pharmacists ban sale of tobacco

Neil Young and Ken Milne, owners of Young's Pharmacy, say they have become increasingly aware that the operation of a pharmacy (a health promotion business) and the selling of tobacco products (an anti-health business) is a serious conflict of interest.

Young's Pharmacy on Georgetown's Main Street joins their other stores, Medical Centre Pharmacy and The Milne Homecare And Prescription Centre, in being "tobacco free". The two newer "medical building" pharmacies have been "tobacco free" since their openings in 1975 and 1987 respectively. Says Young "I'm sure people have been buying tobacco from the Main Street pharmacy since one first opened in this location sometime around 1911. We know our move flies in the face of tradition but we think the time has come to act."

Young and Milne agree that it was a difficult decision, as many of their regular customers and friends are smokers. "Withdraw-

ing cigarettes from our store will probably inconvenience the many who bought their tobacco from us," Milne says. "We truly appreciate our "smoking" customers' past patronage and hope it will remain after we discontinue tobacco sales." He adds "Perhaps we can gain back some of those customers we may have lost because we did sell tobacco products." "In fact, it will be important for us to attract new customers who appreciate our 'No Tobacco' status to remain economically viable."

Young says "Many would have you believe the tobacco agent, whether he or she is a grower, manufacturer or retailer, is blameless in causing people to smoke. They claim they are just satisfying a pre-existing need. I believe this is nonsense! Even the fact that a retailer displays cigarettes and offers them for sale is a promotion for cigarette smoking. At the very least it implies tacit approval. In a pharmacy this is from the people who are supposed to be looking after

your health. Selling tobacco is something we just could no longer do in good conscience. Most of our staff are involved with the Cancer Society and with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. It is ludicrous for us to work hard on one hand battling the effects of smoking and then participate with the tobacco industry and promote smoking on the other. The health facts are unarguable!"

According to Young the financial implications of the move will be significant. Cigarette sales contributed substantially to the profitability of his Main Street pharmacy. He feels, however, that the efforts and space devoted to tobacco products can be redirected to other areas to make up for lost sales. He says, "Better health care promotion will be one such area."

The Canadian Pharmaceutical Association heartily endorses tobacco free pharmacies and the Ontario College of Pharmacy is considering legislation to ban tobacco sales from pharmacies.

Young says the pending Ontario legislation is a hot topic. It involves real and perceived threats to the rights and freedom of pharmacists to sell whatever legal products they like. He foresees that its passing and implementation could be delayed for years. "Unfortunately," says Young, "many pharmacies like a lot of other businesses count on their tobacco profits to remain viable. Banning cigarette sales could close their doors if those affected are unable or unwilling to re-evaluate and restructure their businesses."

Young and Milne say they sincerely hope that this move to kick their "tobacco sales" habit at "Young's" will encourage some smokers to reconsider and kick their "tobacco" habit as well. Says Young: "The costs that smoking related diseases apply to our health care system are stupendous. If a smoker can give up their habit it will be for the common good of everyone as well as for their own good health."

## Appealing to the public

If a picture says a thousand words... then perhaps you have a great story to tell?

The 30th Anniversary Committee of Georgetown Hospital certainly hopes so.

To help celebrate the Hospital's 30 years of operation, Committee organizers are appealing to the public for assistance. Linda Dawson, 30th Anniversary Committee chairperson explains.

"As part of our celebrations, we are holding a special community open house planned for June 23rd. The event, which will be held on Hospital grounds, will include an exhibit area where old photographs and memorabilia of our past 30 years will be on display," says Dawson.

Organizers believe that capturing the Hospital's history in pictorial form will give the staff and community an opportunity to observe how the Hospital has grown and changed over the past three decades.

"We're confident that many of our long-time staff members, as well as local citizens, have some excellent photos for the display boards," Dawson adds.

The 30th Anniversary Committee would appreciate your donation of any Hospital-related photos or other material. Please send it, along with your name, the



date, and brief description of photo (include names of individuals pictured). Also state whether you wish to have photo or material returned.

The deadline is March 29, 1991 and materials can be directed to: The Executive Director, Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, 1 Princess Anne Drive, Georgetown, Ont. L7G 2B8.

For further information, contact Georgetown Hospital, Administration office at 877-0111.



Symbolically breaking cigarettes to indicate Young's Pharmacy and Milne Homecare and Prescription Centre will no longer sell cigarettes, are owners Neil Young (left) and Ken Milne (right), who don't want to promote something that is bad for your health. (Herald photo)

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