

'Our school is the model for stopping drugs'

The Pennsylvania Anti-Drug Coalition, officially formed on May 11, includes as a member Curt Bonaparte, an 18-year-old student who as president of the Student Association at Philadelphia High School, has organized his classmates to stand up and fight drugs. Attending the May 14 New York-New Jersey Anti-Drug Coalition report-back meeting, Curt described his effort in an interview to Executive Intelligence Review, excerpted below.

Q: *How did you get involved in the Anti-Drug Coalition, what do other students think?*

A: I'm not up against a struggle with people my own age, because I have introduced this fight as the key to learning.

This started one day when I spoke to a student in math class about Dope, Incorporated, and how it relates to everything he's doing, the way he dresses (he was wearing a KISS tee-shirt). This made him curious to know more, so the next week he came to school and he had brought together four of the top students in school and he told me about how he was getting the kids in his neighborhood together...and he wanted me to explain to these four young kids exactly what Dope, Incorporated was about and what marijuana did to the brain and body. After I explained it, I could see their curiosity growing. From there I decided to ask if they wanted to form a Drug and Alcohol Council, and they went along with the idea.

After that was formed and we had a few meetings on how we would set up educational programs, I went to our video department of which I am the president and talked to them about doing a documentary.

So we put on the first production and put out information, wrote literature and got it around school and had people coming to the first production....

From there, we drew up some strategies, and that was part of our introduction of the documentary—to draw up strategies....

We have been putting on these productions twice a week for about a month or two and it is starting to become the talk of the school because in the first classes before the documentary, I was xeroxing the medical effects of marijuana, and different statements by law enforcement officials who are working against drugs and scientists, etc. and what I would do is give people who are concerned assignments to do...from the

booklet of information on popular statements that marijuana and its derivatives were harmless; that if it was legalized only a small minority of the people would be taking it; and that law enforcement of marijuana would be a fruitless exercise and a waste of the taxpayers' money....With all the information in this packet I asked them to make an outline that would disprove the statements, or otherwise....I felt good because people were contributing and I felt that that was the way it would have to be with me and the students.

At that point I felt it was about time, and I brought in some people to speak. I set up a meeting with Dr. Ned Rosinsky from the New York-New Jersey Anti-Drug Coalition to teach a class last week. We had administrators, teachers, adults and students there, and it really put a strong impact on the whole school.

At the same time we already had our school editor doing articles for us on medical effects on drugs....

Besides discussing marijuana and the drug problem, we would always get into small seminars on Plato, philosophy, and art, among other things, and so besides talking about the drug problem, we were mixing on very intellectual terms where a lot of the teachers and administrators were still mixing on aristocracy and they couldn't understand the intellectual reason we as students have been using.

When we came into this class with Dr. Rosinsky, and these kids were sharp, and we had the good administrators and the bad administrators mixed in, there really seemed to be a clear-cut division on who is in the room to try and learn and find out (the students) how to eliminate drugs in the school; and also you saw the people who were not listening to reason at all and would try and find different spots to go and attack. But with Dr. Rosinsky and these sharp students, they had no chance at all. It was really a terrific situation, and we had students who came up and said, "Did you see that fool that came in?"

Q: *How many students use drugs in schools and is there a battle shaping up?*

A: There is a definite turnaround and the turnaround is toward education. We are always keeping a balance between the drug education and other education. The drug issue is a direct vehicle toward higher education. I've always made that clear from the first. ...The first thing that students must understand is that this drug problem is affecting their mind and is affecting their lives, is affecting their families, and is affecting their whole environment. If we're going to control the next generation, be the next doctors, scientists, and engineers, then we have to take command of our future, by eliminating drugs and getting involved in intellectual and social commodities that deal with science and technology and advancement.

This has been made clear to students before, when

a teacher would give up on a student, because of the fact that he's not teaching him the way of reason and thinking, through not just their subject, but through other subjects. Instead, the teacher was pushing students into one track, one specific subject, like art, but not providing any insight beyond art.

The artist has capabilities of seeing man growing. When you explain this, the artist has the opportunity to visualize himself in other fields and in dealing with other fields of scientific and technical divisions. A lot of people who are on drugs say "I don't feel the change at all," but if they could see the rigorous courses before them in college they would see the difference.

Q: *How are parents responding?*

A: I have made clear to students that they have older brothers and sisters who don't go to college, but go to work and are on drugs and tend to try to convince younger brothers and sisters to follow the same course. I tell them, "educate yourself. You cannot go to them and accept this direction. You have to make it clear in their mind. You have to tell them what's wrong and anybody else: their teacher, or minister who's on marijuana. Go to them and you have to tell them your insight. You know you're talking the truth, you know you're talking the facts."

So we have created an environment in the school which is a model for education.

...We're going to produce a printed update on our activities and send them out to a mailing list to build broader relations that plug into the coalition. We've made quite a few advancements on the Board of Education. The other day I was receiving an award for an educational program I produced on registration and voting, and the principal introduced me to all the good members of the Board of Education and explained to them exactly what we were doing in school and that he was 100 percent for it, and that he would like to sit down with other board members with me and make sure that they set up a strong educational packet on what we are doing.

We talked to another principal who bought four *Dope, Inc.* books for his school, and he will also be working with us.

Q: *Is it true that one of the school Board members is actually part of the Dope, Incorporated network?*

A: Oh yes. This is what got my principal on the track. One of the board members is a director of one of the B'nai B'rith organizations in Philadelphia. NORML put out a pamphlet and it has all of the people who support legalization of marijuana, and when he saw B'nai B'rith on the list he knew....I pulled out the pamphlet and B'nai B'rith is on the top of the list for supporting marijuana, and heroin, and other hard drugs—which threw this board member off his feet.

Medical use of marijuana

Decriminalization of marijuana advocates are fueling the fight for legalization by citing "evidence" that marijuana has some medical value. This line is being used to justify the reclassification of marijuana from its present federal-law status as a Schedule I substance that cannot be prescribed by doctors because it is a dangerous substance with no proven medical value to a Schedule II substance that can be prescribed because it has a known medical use. At least four states have independently revised their state schedules to list marijuana as a prescribable drug, and 35 state legislatures have before them bills to investigate the effects of marijuana.

In New Jersey, several bills, including A1851, are now under discussion in the state legislature to implement the rescheduling of marijuana or undertake experiments in marijuana.

Presented here is written testimony exposing this fraudulent argument which was submitted to the New Jersey legislature by Ned Rosinsky, M.D. of the Fusion Energy Foundation.

The New Jersey Bill A1851 is a medically incompetent and socially destructive measure, to which the New York-New Jersey Anti-Drug Coalition stands opposed. The published medical literature to date, taken as a whole, does not support the medical usage of marijuana in any of its proposed areas of therapy: in glaucoma, in the nausea associated with cancer chemotherapy, and in other areas. Moreover, the harmful effects of marijuana smoking are so great that, even if a medical usage were demonstrated, the drug could never become a standard therapy for the above conditions.

Furthermore, the reclassification of marijuana to a narcotic Schedule II substance, even if this were hypothetically done to benefit a small number of patients, would have a major detrimental impact on the population as a whole by encouraging the illegal use of the drug, particularly among our youth. The recently released report on drug abuse by the Essex County Grand Jury, which documents that 90 percent of the area's youth have tried marijuana, is testimony enough to the extreme vulnerability of children to peer pressure and the message that marijuana is essentially harmless. In this context, the elevation of marijuana to the status of a medicine in the eyes of the public will only worsen this horrendous situation, especially among the upper and middle elementary school grades.

In the neighboring state of Pennsylvania, the state health commissioner has been petitioned directly by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana