

joint in Stroup's pocket and busted him. That wasn't too bad: Canada had liberal pot laws and when Stroup returned for trial in 1978, the judge let him off with a \$100 fine.

But at the airport on his way home, Canadian customs agents searched his bags and found a joint and a vial containing traces of cocaine. Busted again, he spent the night in jail, was fined \$300 and got kicked out of Canada. The whole absurd episode was like a bad joke.

How can you tell if you might be a little too stoned?

You get busted going through customs with dope after your trial for going through customs with dope.

That was a dumb blunder. But Stroup was about to make a blunder that was infinitely dumber.

Back in Washington, he was lobbying for a bill to ban Federal funding of a controversial program that sprayed Mexican marijuana fields with the herbicide paraquat, shown to cause lung damage in people who smoked the tainted weed. Stroup asked Bourne, Carter's drug adviser, to support the bill. Bourne refused. Stroup was outraged. To him, it was a moral issue: The feds were deliberately poisoning pot smokers! Seeking revenge, Stroup leaked a secret to newspaper columnist Jack Anderson in July 1978: Bourne had snorted cocaine at NORML's 1977 Christmas party. And Stroup revealed the names of a couple of witnesses.

When Anderson broke the story, Bourne told reporters he'd only handled cocaine at the NORML party, he hadn't actually snorted any. It didn't matter, Bourne lost his job.

A few months later, so did Stroup. The folks at NORML didn't like snitches and eased him out the door.

"When I look back on it," Stroup says now, "it was probably the stupidest thing I ever did."

Nobody "in their rational mind," he adds, would jeopardize a relationship with a high White House official over a minor policy dispute.

Is it possible that he wasn't in his "rational mind" because he was too stoned too often?

"Yes," he says. "I think it is possible that my own personal use of cocaine played into that."

In those days he, like many people, thought coke was harmless. Now he knows better. "Cocaine is deadly," he says. "There are probably people who can use cocaine moderately. But I gotta tell you: Based on me and my friends, I didn't see very many of them."

After leaving NORML in 1979, Stroup spent four years as a defense attorney. "Every client I had was a drug offender," he says. "The only people who'd heard of me had been arrested on drug charges."

Unfortunately they weren't the kind of drug offenders he liked—folks who'd been caught with a little weed. They were mostly cocaine smugglers and, he soon realized, a lot of them were thugs.

"So I stepped aside," he says, "and went back into public-interest work."

Stroup, who had divorced in the early '70s, married a television producer and moved to Boston, where he became a lobbyist for the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities.

In 1986 he moved back to Washington to lobby for a family farm organization. In 1989 he became executive director of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. In 1994 he became a lobbyist for the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, an Alexandria-based prison reform group.

Then in 1995, NORML—split by infighting—asked Stroup to come back and run the place.

He returned to find that everything had changed. The movement to legalize marijuana had run aground. In the 1970s, 11 states had decriminalized pot; in the '80s, none did. Nancy Reagan's "Just say no" crusade and the deadly spread of crack cocaine had led to a backlash against drugs. And NORML was nearly broke, politically impotent and beset by feuding factions.

Stroup saved NORML from self-destruction, St. Pierre says, but he failed to bring back the glory days: "Keith could not replicate what he did in the '70s."

Part of Stroup's problem was competition. In the '90s, two new groups arose to advocate drug-law reform, each bankrolled by an eccentric billionaire. The Drug Policy Alliance is funded by financier George Soros. The Marijuana Policy Project, founded by former NORML staffer Rob Kampia, is funded by insurance mogul Peter Lewis. Both groups have spent millions on state referendums to legalize medical marijuana—many successful, some not.

But Stroup has failed to find an eccentric billionaire sugar daddy for NORML.

"I wish we had that kind of funding," he says. "If I had the kind of funding that Kampia has, I think I could have done a lot more with it than he has."

Now NORML limps by on about \$750,000 a year, most of it raised from dues paid by about 12,000 members. It's not enough money to do much politicking, so NORML is now largely a service organization for pot smokers, providing tips on beating drug tests and legal advice for arrested smokers.

Over the past year money was so tight that Stroup laid off two staffers and stopped collecting his \$75,000-a-year salary for two months.

"I view NORML as a small and shrinking dinosaur," Kampia says. "NORML's time has come and gone."

Tom Riley, official spokesman for federal drug czar John Walters, agrees. "Keith and people like that have banged their heads against the wall for years saying 'Legalize pot.' But they're farther behind now than they were 20 years ago."

Riley says Stroup's career reminds him of a line from the movie "The Big Lebowski": "The '60s are over, Lebowski. The bums lost. My condolences."

"I have no doubt I'll be smoking marijuana the day I die," Stroup says.

He loves the weed. He smokes it nearly every night. He comes home from work, pours a glass of chardonnay, lights up a joint and turns on the TV news.

He does not smoke pot when he has to work or drive, he says, because, as the movies of stoner comedians Cheech and Chong prove, pot can make you stupid.

"I learned a long time ago that some of those Cheech and Chong jokes are very real," he says. "If you're in a social setting and you're smoking marijuana, there are going to be a lot of those Cheech and Chong situations, where you feel real strongly about something and you start a conversation and about halfway through you forget what the point was." He laughs. "But that's only when you're stoned. Four hours later, you don't have that."

His new wife doesn't share his passion for pot. Neither does his 35-year-old daughter, who recently had a baby boy, making Stroup a grandfather. He doesn't care that they don't smoke pot and he doesn't think anybody should care that he does smoke it. Forty years of serious inhaling, he claims, hasn't harmed his body or his mind.

"There's absolutely nothing wrong with it," he says, "and it should be of no interest or concern to the government."

Despite his candor on the topic, Stroup hasn't been busted since his Canadian mis-

adventures. But he knows the government and its drug war are always out there, and that can make a guy paranoid. About a year ago, the feds nearly discovered Stroup's stash in a suitcase he'd checked on a plane.

"I had a few joints in an airtight thing inside a sock so you couldn't see it," he says. "I got back home and opened it up and there was this slip saying, 'We opened your bag, blah, blah blah.' And my weed is a few inches away! I said, 'Man, that was too close!' So I no longer carry anything when I'm flying. If I'm going to be someplace for a few days, I ship myself a 'care package.'"

The next day Stroup calls, leaves a message on the voice mail. "Man, I was totally goofy yesterday on that cold medicine," he says. "I hope I wasn't totally goofy in my responses. . . . I should have better sense than to do an interview when I'm stoned out of my mind on cold medicine."

## HONORING DEPARTING U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PAGES

### HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, the end of this week marks the completion of our first semester for the Page academic year and thus several of our House Pages will be leaving us. At the completion of my remarks, I am submitting a list of names of those pages that will be departing for home in the next few days.

Not only do I want to note the participation and service of these fine young people, but as the Chairman of the House Page Board, I want to thank them for their service and commitment to this Institution. They have served with distinction and should be commended for their contributions. They and their fellow classmates have served during a time of great historic events that have included the final weeks of session of the 108th Congress, Presidential and Congressional elections, the Opening of the 109th Congress, the meeting of the Electoral College and last week's Inauguration of President Bush. As well, this class have distinguished themselves through their public service and their fund raising for the Red Cross to help the victims of the recent Tsunami.

We are proud of you and wish you only the best in your future endeavors. Thank you.

#### 2004 FALL SEMESTER PAGES

Erin Leigh Baker—NE; James L. Barnes, III—TN; Scott M. Bengtson—MI; Jordan H. Blumenthal—FL; Mark Bracey-Sherman—IL; Stephanie Ching—CA; Kate E. Collins—CA; Jonathan M. Cowgil—MN; David A. Dazlich—CO; Christopher G. Doyle—NY; David G. Duncan—GA; Maxwell W. Epstein—MD; Scott D. Friedman—NY; Jenna C. Gaughan—MO; Ashley E. Gunn—MS; Sarah M. Harley—SC; Kathryn A. Helin—NH; Laura J. Johnson—WI; Jasma Phyllis Jones—MO; Dawn Marie Kling—PA; Johnathan D. Kristan—WI.

Thomas Lane—TX; Madeleine Claire Parish—OK; Eugene Hee Park—CA; Kimberly A. Peters—FL; Malorie Porter—OH; Melissa L. Price—AL; Maxwell Jason Rabkin—NJ; Edwin A. Robinson, Jr.—NY; Nicole Schuerch—PA; Elizabeth Shockey—OH; Alexandra Sunseri—LA; Miles Edward Taylor—IN; Monique Teixeira—CA; Maximilian D. C. Thompson—NY; Lynsey Nichole Thornton—VA; Cassi Turner—TX; Wilfredo Antonio Velasco Vargas—CA; Corey Walker—MD; Ashlee N. Wilkins—VA; Jaron A. Zanerhaft—OK.