

The Court on Dec. 1, 2008, however, refused to consider a similar argument in the *People v Kha* wherein City of Garden Grove police said federal law prevented them from returning a patient's lawful cannabis. This means the State Court rulings stand — local governments must obey state law, despite federal law. That move further weakened the *San Diego v California* claim that federal marijuana law prevents counties from having to comply with the voter initiative or issue state-mandated medical cannabis ID cards.

West Coasterdam Report

Canadian judge rules in favor of medi-marijuana collectives

A British Columbia, Canada, Supreme Court judge Feb. 2 struck down provisions of a federal law to restrict the supply of cannabis to authorized patients. The decision held as unconstitutional a rule that a designated grower for an authorized person can grow only for that single person, not for a collective. Justice Marvyn Koenigsberg also found the defendant, Mathew Beren, who worked for Vancouver Island Compassion Society, guilty of producing and possessing cannabis for purposes of drug trafficking, but gave him an absolute discharge for a 'research' facility. The court gave the national Parliament in Ottawa one year to fix the law before it will be officially struck down.

Voter Power backing OR dispensary ballot proposal for 2010

Oregon medical cannabis activist group Voter Power and Students for Truth, a Southern OR University club, held a public meeting in Ashland Feb. 2 to discuss a proposed 2010 ballot initiative to allow dispensaries. Speakers included SOU professor William Hughes, medical cannabis farm owner Don Coon, founder of the Berkeley Patients Group Debby Goldsberry, activist and author Ed Rosenthal, retired nurse practitioner Claudia Little of Americans for Safe Access, US Supreme Court medical marijuana litigant Angel Raich of *Gonzales v. Raich*, and Voter Power executive director John Sajo, who also serves on the state Advisory Committee on Medical Marijuana.

New patient union organizing to provide support and services

The Cannabis Protection Union was launched by a group of Eureka CA patients with the theme 'to form a more perfect union' among various reform groups as a network of business interests, non-profit organizations, community and personal needs. The CPU, which issues member ID cards with benefits, has spread to ten towns and states, according to spokesman Carl Stanley. An attorney first offered to give members free advice and courtroom representation at half his normal fee; then a glassblower, doctor and local dispensary offered membership benefits and services. More lawyers joined, then three church congregations. The goal, said Stanley, is to have a chapter in each of the 13 states that have favorable laws by the end of 2009. Info 877-420-0999 or online at cpu420.com

Palm Springs ordinance to regulate cannabis disrupts access

Palm Springs became the first city in Riverside County to allow medical cannabis outlets with a Feb. 18 City Council vote. The vote allows only two dispensing collectives within the city, and actually means less access for patients, since an estimated seven dispensaries now operate there. City Attorney Doug Holland said his office is close to filing lawsuits against two dispensaries and is gathering evidence against all five others.

Sheriff who trained his officers to disregard law steps down

After 14 years as top cop for San Bernardino County CA, Sheriff Gary Penrod stepped down as of Feb. 1. Advocates for cannabis reform are happy to see him go. In 2006, he urged county supervisors to join San Diego's lawsuit to repeal state compassionate use laws. He boasted that he trained his deputies to ignore ID cards and arrest anyone with cannabis. He frequently lobbied legislators and the governor to bloat state Drug War budgets, supporting a bill last year to drug test state welfare recipients. Assistant Sheriff Rod Hoops replaced him Feb. 1.

New 40g decrim bill advances in WA

By Alison Holcomb Drug Policy Director, ACLU of Washington Foundation

The Washington State Senate Judiciary Committee passed Senate Bill 5615, which reclassifies adult possession of no more than 40 grams of cannabis from a misdemeanor crime with mandatory jail time to a civil infraction with a \$100 penalty that can be paid by mail.

A video of the Feb. 18 hearing is posted at TVW.org. To hear elected representatives engage in an open, historic, public discussion and debate of state cannabis laws and the broader Drug War, scroll to the discussion of SB 5615 by clicking on the progress bar at the bottom of the window. The bill next goes before the Senate Rules Committee, to put the bill on the floor of the Senate for full vote. A companion bill, House Bill 1177, was referred to the House Committee on Public Safety, where it has yet to be scheduled for hearing. February 25 was the deadline for bills to be passed out of committee.



WINNING SMILES — (Left to right) National NORML director Allen St. Pierre stands with winners of the Dec. 13 OMCA awards Paul Stanford, Andrew Hangerud, Madeline Martinez of Oregon NORML, and Joe Jontig. Photo courtesy of Anna Diaz, Oregon NORML.

High drama at 7th annual Oregon Medical Cannabis Awards

By Anna Diaz Oregon NORML

The seventh annual Oregon Medical Cannabis Awards (OMCA), the ultimate cannabis event in the state, was held Dec. 13 to evaluate 28 strains at the Ambridge Event Center in Portland, featuring a legal panel that included the OR Medical Marijuana Program manager and provided CLE credits. The event now includes a festival of vendors and demonstrations on the subjects of medical cannabis, industrial hemp and consumer cannabis. Nonprofits represented were THCF Medical Clinics and the Green Party as well as Oregon NORML. One of this year's highlights was the sustainable fashion show.

Allen St. Pierre, Executive Director of national NORML, gave the keynote speech at the awards banquet. This year's Dr.



Richard Bayer Award for support of medical cannabis issues went to State Representative Peter Buckley, who was instrumental in presenting legislation to protect working medical cannabis patients from workplace discrimination.

For the first time ever, the top three winners all came from the same entrant, Paul Stanford, founder and CEO of the THCF Medical Clinics and winner of the 2007 OMCA *Freedom Fighter of the Year* award. The strain Lemon Pledge took top honor, second place went to Train Wreck and third was Dynamite, to the credit of the staff and growers using Andrew Hangerud's grow tips. David Verstoppen received honorable mention for aroma.

A complete list of winners and data from this competition is at ornorml.org.

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WA bill would enable more health care professionals to recommend cannabis

By Martin Martinez*, *Lifeline*

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Wells (D) of Seattle WA introduced Senate Bill 5798 Feb. 2 to better implement the *Medical Use of Marijuana Act* of 1998. She and co-sponsors McCaslin, Keiser, and Pflug propose expanding the field of lawful recommenders. If passed, the bill would add physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, osteopathic physicians, and osteopathic PAs to the category of state health care professionals, along with MDs, who may recommend cannabis as medicine.

Joanna McKee has been helping patients since 1992. The most common complaint she hears is, "My doctor won't sign my recommendation. Do you know of any doctors that recommend marijuana?" McKee does know of hundreds of state MDs who recommend cannabis for their patients, but she is ethically obliged to respect their professional privacy. Physicians often face pressure from all sides and tend to be very sensitive about this controversial subject, which is why McKee lobbied for Senate Bill 5798 to open the "doors of prescription" for thousands of sick people who have difficulty getting that all-important medical authorization.

Doctors who specialize in cannabis recommendations serve an important role for veterans and others who will never get their primary physician's authorization, but experts believe that convincing one's personal physician that the benefits of cannabis outweigh the health risks is a duty of responsible patients. Specialists don't have the same legal impact as primary MDs. The further away from a central urban area and the greater the amount of cannabis involved, the more likely a patient is to face legal problems.

Local authorities often blame federal laws for their resistance to medical cannabis. However, a doctor's free speech rights are guaranteed under the federal *Conant* case, so physicians have nothing to fear. In time, most health care professionals will come to understand that the only practical difference between cannabis and every other herbal product on the market is that thousands of studies and millions of patients all attest to its profound effects.

* Martinez has been a medical cannabis advocate since his first arrest in 1996. More info at CannabisMD.org, CannabisMD.net, and CascadiaNORML.org.



MONTANA CAPITOL — Above: Heather and John Masterson and Angela Goodhope.

Left: Tom Doebare with a Patients and Families United presentation, the first time live cannabis plants were shown at the state capitol in Helena.

Photos courtesy PFU.



Market for hemp is growing

Continued from page 1

be considered as a realistic cause for a positive urine analysis result."

The HIA estimated in November that the total retail value of hemp foods sold over the prior 12 months in North America grew from \$20 million last year to approximately \$33 million this year. Hemp oil offers two essential fatty acids in a perfect ratio, which doctors recommend as part of a healthy, balanced diet. Learn more about the TestPledge program at TestPledge.com.

New head of ONDCP named

Continued from page 1

for cannabis intended for personal use is to be their lowest priority." At Hempfest — where tens of thousands of people smoke pot in unison — SPD sergeant Lou Eagle told a reporter, "We are not out there to enforce the marijuana laws."

Cannabis patients who could still be arrested, despite the state's medical-pot law, have found Kerlikowske fair. Had he chosen, SPD could have maintained or increased pot arrests. He didn't. For Kerlikowske, pot was his lowest priority.

The replacing enforcement with public services test: On that issue, Kerlikowske has incubated a revolution. Seattle implemented two programs to get drug users off the street before they get arrested. City Council Member Nick Licata passed legislation to fund the project. "Gil could have stopped it from [getting funding], but he allowed it go forward," he says. "He's not saying we should do away with the Drug War, but I think he recognizes that it has not been a success and is open to other strategies."

He could be the drug czar to lift the federal ban on funding needle exchange, end the medical pot raids in California, overhaul the nonsensical anti-drug commercials, and seek funding for drug-treatment.

The brilliance of Obama's pick is not just finding someone who is open to new strategies, but one who holds undeniable credibility as a cop. Nobody can claim Kerlikowske doesn't know the impact of drugs on the streets. But he understands the place for low priorities and public health — and he's willing to step back where enforcement alone has failed.

slog.thestranger.com/slog/archives/2009/02/11/czar_struct_obama_s_brillia

Rosenthal appeal heard

By Jane Klein

"No one should be made a felon for doing humanitarian work on behalf of their community," said marijuana advocate and author Ed Rosenthal, who wants his federal conviction on cultivation charges tossed out. Oral arguments were heard Jan. 14 in *US v Rosenthal* by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals over whether he was denied his rights in his May 2007 retrial.

The case epitomizes the clash between state and federal laws. Rosenthal was convicted in 2003 of growing and distributing cannabis after being deputized to do so by Oakland officials, as part of a city effort to promote safe, well-regulated access under California law. After the Ninth Circuit overturned his conviction in 2006 for juror misconduct, Rosenthal was retried and convicted in a second trial described in his appellate brief as "little more than a long, drawn out, directed verdict."

Please turn to page 6

Oregon bills aim to take patients' jobs away

By Anthony Johnson *Voter Power Political Director*

The Oregon legislature is again considering bills that will allow employers to fire or not hire medical cannabis patients, no matter where the cannabis use occurs. Three bills (House Bill 2497 and Senate Bills 426 & 427) have been assigned to legislative committees despite evidence that cannabis patients have not been a danger to the workplace and that voters do not support such laws.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Act (OMMA) was approved by voters in 1998, but state workplaces have not become more dangerous. In fact, the most recent statistics available, 2007, show private sector workplace injury and illness at the lowest recorded rate in state history. The *Occupational Injury and Illness Survey* by the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services reports that in both 1996 and 1997 — before OMMA passed — workers suffered work-related injuries and illnesses at a rate of 7.8 per 100 full-time employees. By 2007, the rate fell to the all-time low of 5.1 cases per 100.

Voter Power commissioned polling firm Grove Insight in December to gauge the public support for a change to the OMMA that allows employers to fire or not hire medical cannabis patients. The poll found that only 32 percent of votes supported the law, with 49 percent opposed.

Despite these facts, Associated Oregon Industries (AOI), a powerful business lobby, is diligently working the legislature for the right to fire or not hire a particular class of patients. Dan Harmon, vice chairman of AOI, has toured the state among business and political leaders, touting the need to pass such bills, claiming OMMA endangers the workplace and signals a permissiveness around substance abuse. His organization donated \$16,000 to the re-election campaign of Dave Hunt, the new Speaker of the House.

Voter Power and other reform groups are countering this with grass-roots lobbying to ensure that the patients and citizens urge their legislators and policy makers to follow the law and simply treat medical cannabis the same as other medicines.

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ASA sues Solano County to issue ID cards

By Kris Hermes Americans for Safe Access

Patient advocates filed a lawsuit against Solano County, CA in January for failing to implement the state-mandated medical marijuana patient identification card program. State law in 2003 mandated that all counties implement an ID card program to assist law enforcement and provide greater protection for patients and their caregivers.

However, despite a July 2008 decision from the Fourth District Court of Appeal affirming that requirement, Solano and several other counties still fail to comply. The lawsuit was set for hearings in March.

“Solano County cannot simply flaunt its obligation under the law,” said Joe Elford, Chief Counsel for Americans for Safe Access, the organization that filed the suit. ASA also helped litigate the landmark *San Diego County v State of California*. On Oct. 16, 2008, the state Supreme Court refused to review the case, making clear

the obligations of counties to follow the state’s medical cannabis law.

“This lawsuit is aimed at forcing counties like Solano to fully implement state law and to stop denying patients their legal rights and protections.” The suit follows letters sent in August and October to warn officials from Solano and 15 other other counties of a lawsuit if they failed to implement the ID card program.

Forty of California’s 58 counties have programs. As a result of the letters and the new court mandate, 11 additional counties (Alpine, Fresno, Kings, Mariposa, Modoc, Nevada, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, and Ventura) have come into compliance or have pledged to do so.

California law directs every county to provide qualified patients and caregivers ID cards that help law enforcement identify lawful patients and caregivers to protect them from arrest and prosecution.

SFPSP patrol officer supports San Fran dispensaries’ role

By Chris Conrad West Coast Leaf

The San Francisco Patrol Special Police agency provides a unique service to people and businesses that require a degree of law enforcement talent, expertise and training that most private security companies do not offer, without calling on City police. The SFPSP has been included in the City Charter since 1847. Its primary role is that of public safety and law enforcement.

“We provide police patrol services to individual businesses, private homeowners and associations,” said Officer Hanley Chan. SFPSP officers are not paid from the Police Dept. budget. They are retained by neighborhood merchants and residents, who contract the service and share the cost for greater security.

“In all my years patrolling the cannabis clubs, no major problems have occurred, he told the *West Coast Leaf* Jan. 15. Similarly,

during that time, none of his clients has filed any complaints against him. “There were initially four cannabis clubs on my beat, but that number has been reduced to two due to public misunderstandings and

Please turn to page 9

Student conferences set to further drug reform

By Jon Perri SSDP

It’s a good time to be a student involved in drug policy reform.

Young people are optimistic that our new President and administration will bring some sensibility to US drug policy. With the White House stating that it plans to end DEA raids on cannabis patients and providers, young drug policy activists are seeing the change they helped create. The administration supports needle exchange programs, and VP Joe Biden introduced a bill to remove the crack / powder cocaine sentencing disparity issues, on which student activists have lobbied for years.

Students for Sensible Drug Policy chapters are mobilizing regionally this spring at conferences in major cities like Berkeley, Boston, Tallahassee and Ann Arbor.

The first SSDP West Coast conference will be held April 24-26, hosted by the UC Berkeley chapter. Other chapters from CA will attend, along with those from AZ, NV, OR, UT and WA. The conference will begin with panels on topics such as “The Future of Medical Marijuana” and “What is Harm Reduction?”

The following day will be more hands-on, with interactive workshops teaching young activists the skills to run effective

and successful campaigns, plan events, and work with the media. One benefit of holding the conference in the Bay Area is the large number of reform groups and activists located here. Students can network other SSDP members, as well as groups like DPA, HRC, ASA and more.

“We’re so excited to be hosting SSDP’s first West Coast Regional conference” said Rishi Malhotra, UCB chapter’s president. “We’re eager to bring members of the Bay Area reform community together for this conference to help further the cause.”

The conference also plans to kick off SSDP’s newest project, AMPLIFY: *Artists Making Political Leadership Inspirational For Youth!* It aims to connect musicians and artists with activists at our chapters to develop a mutually beneficial relationship that will further SSDP’s mission and promote AMPLIFY artists at more than 150 SSDP chapters across the country.

Artists such as hip-hop’s Immortal Technique, East Coast reggae stars Roots of Creation, and John Brown’s Body have agreed to work with the AMPLIFY project. Rachel Antony Levine, a local musician and employee at the Berkeley Patients Group, spearheads the project.

Info about the Conference, ssdp.org or 415.875.9463.



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LA dispensary draft ordinance is a shocker

Patients oppose draft version

By Don Duncan Americans for Safe Access

Medical cannabis patients and advocates in Los Angeles joined City Councilmember and LA Police Department veteran Dennis Zine in opposing a draft ordinance prepared by City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo.

That plan seeks to regulate medical cultivation, but in the process would outlaw hundreds of storefront dispensing collectives now serving patients. The first draft of the controversial proposal surfaced in April 2007, but has been stalled in the city's Planning and Land Use Management Committee (PLUM) until recently.

The proposal regards all cannabis sales as illegal, even within a legitimate collective or cooperative of patients. It seeks to ban storefront facilities that provide medicine, and sets onerous restrictions on lawful cultivation. Advocates are calling on PLUM to reject the ordinance and ask for a new version based on ordinances in other cities and counties, and incorporating the input of the ad hoc working group convened by the Planning Dept. in 2007.

Councilmember Ed Reyes, who chairs the committee, convened an unprecedented meeting of advocates, city staff, and law enforcement on Feb. 12 to discuss revisions to the ordinance. Five advocates and more than 20 city staff members met for over an hour to give him more detailed information than he could gather from the short testimony provided during the Jan. 27 PLUM hearing. Advocates from the city's former working group submitted an eight-page report and copious attachments detailing shortcomings in the proposal.

The draft ordinance ignores more than

200 storefront collectives and cooperatives, focusing instead on tight regulations for collective gardens. The City Attorney maintains that sales of cannabis and storefront facilities are both illegal, and therefore cannot be regulated. Guidelines published by Attorney General Jerry Brown in August 2008, however, clearly allow patient associations to maintain storefronts to serve members. Dozens of cities and counties, including LA County, already have regulations for storefront facilities that sell medicine to registered members.

City staff attending the February meeting seemed reluctant to accept any role in regulating medical cannabis collectives. Police Commission Executive Director Richard Tefank said he did not believe the police department could regulate collectives. Deputy City Clerk Konrad Carter said his department lacked the manpower to oversee providers. Frustrated by the lack of city staff participation, Reyes reminded them that, "We are public servants and we have to do our jobs."

Reyes promised to talk more with city staff before the draft ordinance comes back to the PLUM Committee after a 30-day continuance. Advocates hope the committee will reject the draft, so a new version can be created before City Attorney Delgadillo is replaced by his likely successor, City Councilmember Jack Weiss, in an election in March.

Weiss is considered even less sympathetic to cannabis, although his departure from the Council may clear the way for long-time medical cannabis supporter Paul Koretz to be elected in his place.

For more information about the draft ordinance in Los Angeles, visit AmericansForSafeAccess.org/LAOrdinance

Suit filed to compel San Bernardino County to issue ID cards

By Lanny Swerdlow, R.N.

Medical marijuana patient Scott Bledsoe of Crestline does not want to live in fear of being arrested for legally using cannabis as recommended by his doctor. He's decided to do something about it.

Accompanied by attorney J. David Nick and local cannabis patients and advocates, Bledsoe filed a lawsuit Jan. 5 to compel San Bernardino County to start issuing the state-mandated medical cannabis ID cards and to stop arresting, prosecuting and imprisoning lawful patients.

In conjunction with their thrice-failed lawsuit to overturn California's pioneering medical cannabis law, the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors ordered the County Health Dept. to not issue state-mandated ID cards. State law allowing medical use requires patients to have this card in their possession to not be subject to arrest for certain cannabis related activities.

Without the card program in place, Sheriff Deputies can and do arrest legal patients. "San Bernardino has denied protection to sick people," said Bledsoe, who uses cannabis for a variety of symptoms.

Bledsoe said that his lawsuit seeking a court order to compel the county to issue the state cards is a last resort. Patients and advocates have spoken to the Supervisors numerous times asking them to drop their legal challenges and issue the ID cards.

"Those attempts have fallen on deaf ears. A sick person should not have to fear arrest from a lawless and rogue sheriff who has decided that his personal bias should be above the law that the citizens put in place 12 years ago," says Bledsoe.

Nick points out that the filing of this lawsuit is 'a shot across the bow' as "public officials need to understand that the movement is well-organized and well-represented. These lawsuits will continue to be filed until we have obedience to the rule of law."

For information on Inland Empire meetings, events and action go to marijuananeews.org or call 760-799-2055.



Nick and Bledsoe

Photo courtesy of Lanny Swerdlow



East Bay NORML — A large turnout came to Oaksterdam University Student Union in Oakland Feb. 19 for the opening meeting of East Bay National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, a spin-off of California NORML, whose director, Dale Gieringer addressed the group as it set about making plans for local reforms. Oakland City Council member Rebecca Kaplan was on hand to express her support for the community's wishes to increase the number of dispensaries, allow smoking on-site and edibles at the existing dispensaries, and encourage 'Measure Z Clubs' for non-medical adult sales or consumption. West Coast Leaf photo by Chris Conrad.

Drug War centennial aptly falls on April 1, 2009

By Dale Gieringer California NORML

Congratulations; this is the 100th anniversary of the *Opium Exclusion Act of 1909*, the first US law to prohibit a drug — namely 'smoking opium.' The Theodore Roosevelt administration enacted it to curry favor with China, which had begun its push for opium prohibition by convening the first international anti-drug conference on Feb. 1, 1909 in Shanghai. As a gesture of American good faith, Congress enacted the OEA Feb. 9, making it illegal to import opium for non-medicinal purposes as of April 1, 1909.

Thus *April Fools' Day* marks the real anniversary of the start of the US Drug War; when US Customs began to enforce the first prohibition of an 'illicit' drug.

The law mainly impacted the Chinese,

the major consumers of 'smoking opium.' The medicinal-grade opium used by most Americans wasn't yet affected.

Agents descended on the nation's Chinatowns, where addicts were initially reported to suffer agonies from an opium famine. Before long, however, the black market set in and hop-heads turned increasingly to morphine and heroin. The OEA set the stage for stronger measures, and Congress went on to enact stringent control of all narcotics in the *Harrison Act* of 1914, that led to our modern quagmire.

Following the OEA, stories of drug crime and violence became an increasing staple of the news. A century later we take the propaganda campaigns for granted, not remembering that there was a time when they were virtually unknown.

Snags hit state ID card processing in Orange Co.

By Kandice Hawes and OC Norml

The Orange County Health Department (OCHD) has been issuing state identification cards to cannabis patients since January 2008. Patients who supported this ID card program hoped it would provide more protection and be able to clearly identify legitimate patients to law enforcement. Recently problems in the processing of patients' paperwork have been exposed.

Working at a physician's office and with OCHD regularly, there have been several incidents where the Department office in Orange County and Riverside have issued state ID cards to patients before the physicians' verification paperwork had been returned.

The OCHD had released the ID card to the patient whom they had not yet verified as a current patient. Upon confronting

OCHD staff with this issue they insisted they may issue cards before receiving back the paperwork, and they have the right to cancel a card at any time if the physician's paperwork was not received later.

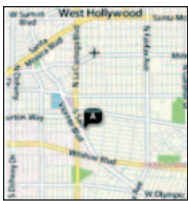
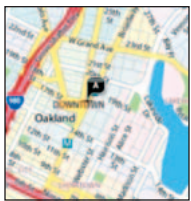
Another issue is that OCHD staff take a patient's fee and start processing paperwork with no regard to when the approval expires on its face. In a few cases, patients have renewed their recommendation based on the date of their ID card, not their physician's paperwork, which later may create problems for the medical staff.

The Medical Marijuana Program ID Card should be operated with the same standards as any other government program. Patients should try to apply for their MMIP Card as close to the date of their recommendation as possible to try to avoid any confusion or problems.

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DEA raid on Estes sent protests to White House

By Dale Gieringer California NORML Director

In the first DEA medical marijuana raid of the Obama administration, just two days after the inauguration, agents raided Ken Estes' collective in North Lake Tahoe.

The raid set off a firestorm of protest from medical cannabis advocates, who bombarded the White House hotline with phone calls asking the President to respect his pledge to end the raids. Complaints about the raid were reportedly the number one topic on the White House Hotline.

Estes, a quadriplegic and single parent who has been the target of repeated raids, said the DEA "is depriving our economy of jobs and taxes."

Estes said that DEA not only closed his business, it took his car and money and threatened to take his home and children. "I'm a contributing member of society, creating jobs and paying taxes," says Estes, "but the DEA keeps taking my stuff."

Last December, the DEA forced Estes to close what had been the only operating dispensary in Contra Costa county, Holistic Solutions. "I had nine employees and had



Ken Estes

paid over \$51,000 in sales taxes to the state in the past three months," he says.

Last May, DEA agents raided Estes and forced him to close two other dispensaries in San Mateo and Clearlake, leaving a path of destruction in their wake.

Estes, 44, credits medical cannabis with giving him gainful employment.

"I was proud of myself to get off welfare, off disability, and to start paying taxes," he says. Estes blames the San Francisco DEA office for targeting him, saying that local police have given him no trouble.

DEA raids have cost the state millions in sales tax revenues, according to records collected by California NORML. In addition, they have deprived the state of hundreds of taxpaying jobs, contributed to criminality, and discouraged development of a legally regulated market.

On Feb. 3, the DEA raided four more dispensaries in the LA area, setting off more protests.

The next day, White House spokesman Nick Shapiro announced that the administration would end the raids, explaining that time would be needed to phase in new personnel. The DEA and many DOJ offices remain in the hands of Bush-administration holdovers pending new appointments, which can take months to fill.

Rosenthal continues crusade to clear his name in Fed court

Continued from page 3

In Rosenthal's recent second appeal, his attorneys argued that defendants have a fundamental right to present a complete and effective defense in cases where there is a conflict between state and federal law. Lead attorney Michael Clough will ask the appellate panel to decide:

- Whether the jury should have been allowed to hear evidence that Rosenthal acted on a good faith belief that he had been deputized by the City of Oakland.
- Whether he should have been allowed a defense based on mistake of law.
- Whether he should have been allowed to offer testimony by Oakland officials to refute allegation that he was involved in an

unlawful conspiracy.

• Whether trial judge Charles Breyer denied Rosenthal's constitutional right to testify in his own defense when he ruled that Rosenthal could testify, but without witnesses to corroborate his claims.

Rosenthal was originally arrested in 2002 with several others in federal raids timed to coincide with a San Francisco speech by DEA Director Asa Hutchinson. He was convicted a year later. The majority of jurors, however, recanted the next day, setting off another flurry of press coverage. The Rosenthal trial and its aftermath generated major news media coverage.

Info at GreenAid.com

Years after Will Foster was released and left state, OK still wants him Oklahoma is not OK for cannabis patients

By Mikki Norris Human Rights and the Drug War

Oklahoma is one of the worst states to get caught with marijuana. Just ask Will Foster. He was the prisoner featured in the book, *Shattered Lives: Portraits from America's Drug War*, who received a 93-year sentence in that state for growing a small, indoor garden to treat his rheumatoid arthritis. Due to public outcry he was able to get his sentence reduced to 20 years on appeal and was released in 2001 after serving 4.5 years of his sentence in prison.

However, Oklahoma isn't done with Foster yet. Even though he successfully completed and was released from California supervision two and a half years after moving to the Bay Area, the parole board issued a warrant to get him back to serve more time for a supposed mistake they made calculating the length of his parole.

Meanwhile, Foster has been sitting in Sonoma County jail since March 2008, following a raid of his garden in his garage at his Santa Rosa home by a joint task force of DEA and local county law enforcement, despite knowing he was a medical cannabis patient. By all measures, Foster was in compliance with local guidelines for a relatively small garden with recommendations for six patients. However, the task force had it out for him. They not only arrested his girlfriend, Susie Mueller, but also took away her five-year-old daughter, placing her in child protective custody for a time.

"Andy Cash, one of the narcotics officers, seemed mad that the DEA did not want the case," Mueller said. "We heard him say he was not leaving until he found something. Then a few minutes later he came out laughing saying he found meth and 'ecstasy' (MDMA). But he wouldn't show it to any of us, and he refused to take any hair samples, blood test or any kind of drug test at all from us that would prove we don't use those drugs."



Will Foster

"I am disturbed that a federal warrant had been obtained to circumvent California law, and am outraged that the officers staged photos to manipulate the evidence to use against Susie and her child and to weaken Will's resolve," said Mary Pat Jacobs, a local resident and caregiver.

Fortunately for Mueller, her case has been dismissed and she got her daughter back, but Foster's woes continue. Realizing that the marijuana charges are weak, the state has offered him a misdemeanor for pleading guilty to the possession of the small amount of the other drugs found. For anyone else facing these charges and who had already been imprisoned for 11 months, this would be the end, and they would be free to go home.

Claiming his innocence, Foster is not willing to take the deal. He'd rather take his chances at trial, starting with a challenge to the search warrant, which was issued by a federal judge with a standard that does not recognize medical cannabis, unlike California's, which does.

To make matters worse, the DEA agent along with Task Force agents Chris Bertolli and Andy Cash volunteered to escort him back to OK and to testify that he was cultivating. Since there is no medical cannabis defense in OK, Foster would be at the mercy of the same parole board that issued the false warrant to make him return. Foster could be sent back to prison until 2025. It's time for more public outcry.

Trial is expected to begin on April 17, and Foster could use community support. Please call Jacobs at 707-847-3744 or check out medicalmarijuanaofamerica.com for updates on his case and to confirm court dates. Donations to his legal defense are greatly appreciated. Make out checks to "Chris Andrian, Attorney" and send to Jacobs, PO Box 196, Jenner, CA 95450.

DEA tested Obama's resolve

Continued from page 1

campaign is now American policy."

In a statement a few weeks ago, a White House spokesperson said, "The President believes that federal resources should not be used to circumvent state laws, and as he continues to appoint senior leadership to fill out the ranks of the federal government, he expects them to review their policies with that in mind."

Medical cannabis raids intensified under former-President George W. Bush, with more than 100 paramilitary-style raids, new indictments, and letters threatening property owners who rent to medical cannabis facilities with prosecution and civil asset forfeiture.

Americans for Safe Access members and other cannabis advocates responded with thousands of phone calls to the White House, asking the President to fulfill his repeated campaign pledges not to use federal resources to interfere with state medical cannabis laws. ASA, the nation's largest medical cannabis advocacy organization, sent policy recommendations aimed at harmonizing federal and state law and encouraging research to President Obama and Congress earlier this year.

"Within 24 hours of taking office, Obama signaled his administration would eliminate the crack/powder cocaine sentencing disparity and support federal funding for syringe exchange programs," said Ethan Nadelmann executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance. "Now his attorney general is saying the Administration will let states set their own cannabis policies. While certainly not a high priority, it seems clear that the President wants to treat drug use as a health issue, not a criminal justice issue."

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Cop can't count, judge won't release patient

By Vanessa Nelson medicalmarijuanaofamerica.com

For John Bearden, the fight over implementing California's medical marijuana law is a treacherous one. The mild-mannered grandpa is being prosecuted by Solano County for nine plants confiscated from his garden back in August 2007.

A doctor's recommendation for cannabis didn't prevent Bearden from being arrested, nor did it prevent him from being hit with felony charges in state court.

This Feb. 2, Judge E. Bradley Nelson ruled that a trio of possession and cultivation counts against Bearden would stick.

The decision relied on the opinion of sheriff's detectives, who testified that Bearden possessed nine plants, a half-gram of processed bud and a quarter-gram of hashish, for the purpose of sales. On the stand, the sheriff's detectives said their search of Bearden's home yielded indicia of sales, such as plastic baggies, scales, a typewriter, blank labels and empty plastic containers labeled "For Medical Use Only."

Defense attorney Bill McPike, however, presented evidence that the plastic containers were leftover packaging that Bearden obtained at an Oakland dispensary.

Defense expert witness Chris Conrad testified that the plants were immature and many aspects of Bearden's case point to personal intent rather than commercial. These factors include the small plant count, the trivial amount of processed cannabis, the lack of luxury items and the absence of sales records. He shrugged off the scales, baggies and labels as "not unusual for medical patients."

However, the police report of the raid

quotes Bearden's wife as saying that her husband shared his yield with other patients. Deputy DA Julie Underwood insisted this was evidence of distribution activity not covered by the marijuana laws.

"I would argue that the Compassionate Use Act does not even apply here," Underwood said.

Prosecuting a nine-plant medical garden may seem like waste of resources, but that argument falls on deaf ears in Solano County. In fact, February's ruling in the Bearden case came just weeks after the advocacy group Americans for Safe Access filed a lawsuit against the

county for refusing to issue state-mandated medical cannabis identification cards.

The Board of Supervisors voted against implementing the ID card program in 2006, despite public pleas from Bearden and other medical cannabis advocates.

"I remain very skeptical of any progress with the authorities in Solano County," Bearden told a local newspaper. He has grounds for skepticism, if not outright suspicion. While initial police reports of his bust state that fifteen plants were seized from his garden, that count was amended to nine plants a week later.

McPike maintains that the inflated numbers were fabricated to justify arresting Bearden. At the time of the raid, the default garden limits in Solano County were six mature plants and 12 immature plants. That argument will likely be fleshed out as the case proceeds towards trial.

Or, perhaps, if plants continue to vanish from the Sheriff's storage rooms, the evidence against Bearden just might disappear altogether.



John Bearden

Advantages of outdoor organic bear a good look

By Bud King

With the proliferation of hydroponics shops urging people to set up their own indoor grow rooms, and local authorities implementing regulations banning outdoor cannabis gardens due to odor, it is time to take a closer look at the benefits of organic outdoor-grown cannabis.

The key driver of photosynthesis is light, so no matter how perfect the fertilizer mix, grow medium, and environment, growth is still limited to the amount of light available. One kilogram of coal makes about 2 kwh of electricity, so a single 1000 watt lamp will require 500 kilos of coal — about a half-ton (or 400 pounds of natural gas) to power it for one cycle.

High wattage lights, ventilation, pumps, fans and other electrical devices all need adequate electrical wiring beyond that normally found in homes. Most 110-volt residential circuits are rated at 15 Amps and are quickly overloaded with more than one grow light per circuit, creating potential fire hazards. Outdoors, the



sun handles all that power and more in wireless mode.

Exotic hydro solutions that are urea-based go to great lengths trying to provide thousands of minerals and nutrients that occur naturally in healthy soil. Urea is derived from petroleum and natural gas. Healthy soil has the full package of nutrients and trace minerals required for healthy plant growth.

Pests are a fact of garden life, and synthetic insecticides have been linked to toxic

Please turn to page 10

Pioneering dispensary-chain operator sentenced to 5 years

By Vanessa Nelson [Medical Marijuana of America](http://MedicalMarijuanaofAmerica.com)

During a hearing in early February, former dispensary operator Larry Kristich was fined \$500,000 and sentenced to five years in federal prison.

Kristich, 66, was the president of the Compassionate Caregivers chain of medical cannabis dispensaries, which had locations in West Hollywood, San Diego, Bakersfield, Oakland, San Francisco, Ukiah, and Alameda counties. Federal investigators claimed that Compassionate Caregivers employed two hundred people, grossed a total of \$95 million and distributed over 15,000 pounds of cannabis during its three years of operation.

The West Hollywood location, called the "Yellow House," was raided by the Los Angeles Police Department in 2005, leading to the seizure of the chain's bank account and the closure of its facilities. Kristich was in Costa Rica when he was federally indicted in July 2007, but he returned shortly afterward to surrender to US authorities. In early 2008, he pled guilty to a count of maintaining a drug-involved premises and a count of promotional money laundering. Kristich has been placed in a detention center in Los Angeles to await assignment to a federal prison.

Send mail to: Larry Roger Kristich 33309-112, Metropolitan Detention Center, PO Box 1500, Los Angeles, Ca 90053

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Baby Boomers, young people help grow support for future cannabis reforms

Continued from page 1

providers in states where medical marijuana is legal.

Voters overwhelmingly said yes by 72 to 21 percent, with voters in all demographic groups agreeing.

The day after the poll results were released, White House spokesman Nick Shapiro announced the administration's intentions to end the Federal DEA raids on cannabis patients and medical providers.

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Ammiano introduces cannabis regulatory bill

Continued from page 1

State Board of Equalization member Betty Yee spoke in support of AB 390, saying that it would save the state's taxpayers some \$1.3 billion. California NORML supplied economic analysis for the bill, provided the bill's text from a draft donated by former State Senator John Vasconcellos, and also provides information about the bill at canorml.org.

Also endorsing the Ammiano bill are Oakland City Council member Rebecca Kaplan, Judge James Gray, San Francisco Sheriff Mike Hennessey, the Drug Policy Alliance and Marijuana Policy Project.

Assembly Bill 390 would not alter state medical marijuana laws. Patients and collectives could grow for their own supply without paying any excise tax. Non-medical growers would be allowed to grow up to ten plants for personal use.

Despite the increased taxes, the bill's sponsors expect the price of cannabis would decline sharply due to decreased pressure from law enforcement.

This is the first legalization bill to be introduced since state outlawed cannabis or "Indian hemp" in 1913. Since then, millions of Californians have come to enjoy cannabis, despite some 2.4 million arrests.

Although support for legalization is growing, there is little expectation that Ammiano's bill will be signed this year. Gov. Schwarzenegger has blindly vetoed bills opposed by law enforcement, which strongly supports the status quo. "The last thing our society needs is yet more legal intoxicants," whined John Lovell, chief lobbyist for the Narcotics Officers' Assn.

A major political obstacle to the bill is

that it flies in the face of current federal law. Supporters hope this can be overcome. "The final architecture of the bill has yet to be defined," said Ammiano in a Feb. 25 interview on CBC's *As It Happens*. "Accommodation is possible. It's possible that laws may not be the same in a year or two."

Californians should contact their legislators to support AB 390; for info, see canorml.org.

Fighting for their lives

By Chris Conrad

Dying to Get High: Marijuana as Medicine. By Wendy Chapkis and Richard J. Webb, NYU Press, 272 pages. \$22.

Sociologist Wendy Chapkis and coauthor Richard Webb examine the hot medical, social and political issues surrounding medical marijuana through the lens of the Santa Cruz CA patient collective, WAMM. The Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana specializes in assisting seriously and terminally ill patients. In addition to their personal struggles for health and a reliable supply of medicine, collective members must also contend with the federal Drug War and *Reefer Madness*-style punditry.

Dying to Get High captures events in a meaningful context. Chapkis and Webb have written an important book that paints a probing portrait of cannabis as well as its prohibition. It does so without losing touch with the deeply human and personal experiences of people who live a nightmare but are comforted by an amazing plant.



Botanist battles Federal marijuana monopoly

By Fred Gardener *O'Shaughnessy's Journal*

The "final" DEA decision issued Jan 12 in the case of *Craker v. DEA* might not be final after all. Lyle Craker is the UMass-Amherst botany professor who applied in 2001 for a DEA application to grow cannabis for use by FDA-approved medical researchers.

After a three-and-a-half-year run-around he was turned down on the grounds that the nation's one licensed grower, Mahmoud ElSohly, U Mississippi, was meeting all the researchers' needs. Craker appealed and after a few more years won — in the opinion of the Administrative Law Judge who heard the case — but after another year-plus of 'review,' as the Bush gang was exiting stage right, acting DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart, issued a 'final' rejection of Craker's application.

Craker, with legal help from ACLU and Julie Carpenter of Jenner & Block (working pro bono), filed a "motion to reconsider" that could extend the case until Obama appointees are running DEA. Caren Woodson of Americans for Safe Access convinced Rep. John Oliver (D-MA, whose district includes Amherst) and 15 co-signers to send a letter urging AG Eric Holder to grant the motion. Leonhart, perhaps

sensing a shift in the political winds, then gave Craker's lawyers additional time to file a response to the "final" ruling.

The best-case scenario, according to Craker's longtime backer Rick Doblin of Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, would be that "DEA decides to reverse its final ruling and give Craker the license, before April 1 when the current Final Ruling becomes effective."

Worst case? "We fail to gather sufficient political pressure and end up having to sue DEA in the DC Court of Appeals, which could take years, cost lots of money, and give the Obama Administration a reason to do nothing until the litigation is completed.... Unless there is a political decision to let research take place, we could bounce back and forth between DEA and the Court of Appeals for Obama's entire first term."

Doblin adds, "I'd say the worst case is more likely, but that our odds for the best case are improving. ... DEA is on the defensive and needs a new strategy."

The federal monopoly on growing cannabis for approved research has held back work in the US, but not in other parts of the world. For the most current information, subscribe to *O'Shaughnessy's Journal* online at oshaughnessys.com.

Send the right message to children: The facts

By Norman Lepoff, M.D. retired

I have been doing research on cannabis for over 40 years. To earn my M.D. degree, I was required to become an expert in pharmacology, biochemistry, organic chemistry, pathology and physiology. Recently, I read a newspaper diatribe in which the author wrote, "if New Jersey

approved medical marijuana it would send a bad message to our children." It turns out that our children are not as stupid as the pundits and politicians think.

In 1996 when California was in the process of passing Prop 215, the governor, Senators Feinstein and Boxer, and the Attorney General all ranted that voters were being duped by 'drug legalizers.' They predicted an epidemic of abuse among children and young people. Adolescent cannabis use instead declined steadily.

The truth did and does not send a bad message to anyone. It is a scientific fact that cannabis is non-toxic, and has numerous medical indications but minimal psychological dependence. Nobody ever died of cannabis usage, yet thousands become addicted and die every year from alcohol and tobacco. Those legal drugs are toxic and highly addictive. *Delirium Tremens* (alcohol withdrawal) can be fatal.

If we really care about our children, we will speak the truth, and act with reason.

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Spring Fever

By Samuel Janovici

Spring gives us all a chance to reflect and discover something new. Research is key. Peruse a book, talk with others, read magazine articles about advances in indoor horticulture, check Internet resources. Don't fixate on dogma, there's always a surprise waiting for you. Science moves forward and you should too.

When to plant or to transplant? Timing is everything. Outdoors, that means after the last killer frost of winter. Sunlight is a huge consideration; location is everything. It's never too early to plan your endeavor by planting the area with ground-covering plants and scented herbs that may serve you throughout the year. Consider color contrasts and plant heights, too.

Look at your garden area carefully, walk around it more than just a few times, and study all angles like prying eyes or aerial surveillance. Backyard gardeners in particular must consider their landscaping needs. Check to be sure your location is ideal — that no one can glimpse or 'scents' your efforts. Flowering shrubs such as oleander and tall distractions like bamboo can be useful, if not vital to success.

Whether you are a seed-and-go kind of person, an indoor gardener or an indoor-to-outdoors startup; take the photoperiod



seriously. At the time of planting, check your photoperiod to see how many hours of daylight your area provides and use a light meter to see how much light is available. Indoor starts are an adventure in science and cleanliness. Wash down all surfaces with a bleach solution, clean or replace containers and review growing protocols. Starts can be vegged in 18 hour periods or less to be moved into natural conditions, as low as 14 hours without problems. You can force-flower an outdoor crop by dropping a light cover over it for 12 hours a day, but it's a lot of work and can easily damage a crop if it goes wrong.

Cannabis is very light-sensitive throughout its life cycle. Seed growers need to watch out for the development of males and pull them out quickly. Cloned plants may all be females, but they have delicate roots, are touchy to transplant and may morph into hermaphrodites. Keep a close eye under leaves for hidden pests. As the vegetative plants grow, consider your pruning and support options. Spreading the branches early will give a bigger plant further down the road, and a few larger plants fits the state prosecution threshold of six mature plants harvested per patient. For small gardens, container gardening is a good option. Security concerns may demand mobility that open ground just cannot afford. Terracotta, plastic or grow-bags all work fine. It boils down to personal choice, garden design, conditions, resources and politics. Moving

Please turn to page 19

Changing to a hemp-based economy could help solve financial, manufacturing and water crises

By Richard Davis USA Hemp Museum

It is within the Constitutional power of Californians to kick the hemp revolution into high gear and free the plant to do its economic magic on the State.

The regional capacity is enormous. Hemp can be grown as a second crop on 700 square miles of rice fields in California equaling 448,000 acres, producing 5,000 pounds or two and one half tons per acre. That's 1,120,000 tons of hemp that can be burned for electricity in existing or new, regional biomass plants, or made into paper, textile, plastics, building materials, auto alcohol fuels or any of 50,000 viable products that keep the money in our State — the eighth largest economy in the world.

And that is just the rice crop; hemp could entirely replace the state's cotton crop — 451,000 acres in 2007 for another 1,120,000 tons of hemp. (In 2008, 9.5 million acres of cotton were planted in the US.) Half the state alfalfa crop planted as hemp equals at least another 1,120,000 tons of hemp. Hemp can help in a big way with water savings, as well, especially if agrono-

mists work to breed drought-resistant cultivars rather than low-THC strains.

California voters broke the 60-year hemp prohibition with Prop 215 and freed medical cannabis. The people must next free the whole hemp plant.

The voters could again do it directly by the initiative process, like Prop 215. The legislature or governor could pass a bill or put a referendum on the ballot. The grand juries or courts could also initiate a due process hearing in the public interest.

The state and global economic crisis will not be fully solved until hemp is restored to its natural place in society.

However, the 'big banks' are part of the problem. North Dakota already has a state bank that loans money to farmers at one percent interest. Proponents of cannabis plant should consider the need for a California State Bank, where we put our taxes and fees, and print our own debt-free state Greenbucks* to finance our own recovery.

* Ellen Hodgson Brown. *The Web Of Debt: The shocking truth about our money system and how we can break free.* 2008. webofdebt.com.

San Fran patrol officer sees dispensaries help the community

Continued from page 4

encounters with law enforcement."

Chan said the relationship is beneficial to all. Dispensaries who contract with SFPSP increase their security, add another uniform officer to patrol the neighborhood, reduce the burden on city police, and cut the risk that a minor issue at a dispensary will escalate into a major legal problem.

Recently, SFPSP came under fire from the SFPD and Police Commission. "What they are doing," said Chan, "is trying to put us out of business. The SFPD is denying qualified applicants the opportunity to serve as patrol specials by needlessly

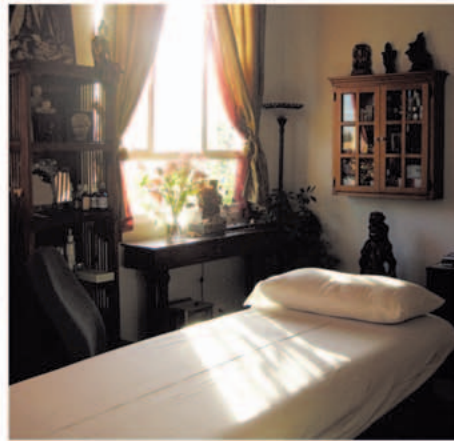
delaying applications over trivial matters, while the Commission has demanded a client list from the patrol special. Their stated reason was 'to make sure no one was being overcharged.' Never has a complaint been filed regarding our prices."

Patrol Officers are trained at SF Police Academy, or its equivalent, and have fulfilled Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) requirements. During hours of patrol, officers make passing calls to check the interior and exterior of a property and surrounding city streets to see that all is well. For more information, please contact Officer Jane Warner at 415-559-9955.

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Mendo proposal to tax medi-cannabis production

By **Pebbles Trippet** MMMAB secretary

Marijuana is the unrivaled economic engine of Mendocino County. It is now estimated that 2/3 of the county's economy is derived from cannabis production — unregulated, untaxed and underground.

The industries that once supported Mendo — fishing and timber — are hanging by threads with severe unemployment. The recent collapse of Hargrove Lumber leaves 200 employees looking for work where there is none. What remains is a tightly regulated tourist economy, dependent on outsiders, and the unregulated cannabis economy, dependent on local residents. Since prohibition effectively organizes crime, increasing numbers of outside criminal elements are taking insidious advantage of illicit profits.

Collectives and cooperatives, protected by SB 420 (HS11362.7), are the wave of the future as an alternative to profit. The bill's goal is "to enhance access of patients and caregivers to medical marijuana through collective, cooperative cultivation."

The time has come to recognize medical cannabis for its production rather than prosecution value. The norm is to assess businesses based on land use — schools, chicken farms, day care centers. Why not

apply the same standard to medical cannabis so as to benefit the county economically? Gardens that are collectively or cooperatively organized should pay a land use fee for a growing annual income stream, without any change to state law.

This would normalize relations with the medical cannabis community and establish a needed income flow from small farmers to county coffers. It would rein in the law enforcement drive to arrest, prosecute, fine, forfeit property, incarcerate and criminalize lawful patients and caregivers.

Under the de Vall-MMMAB (Mendo Medical Marijuana Advisory Board) *General Plan Update* proposal, "Supervisors would begin regulating the legal production of medical cannabis under specific land use designations with either a 'use by right' (no permit required for individuals) or by approval of a *Minor* or *Major Use Permit* for 'collective cooperative cultivation projects' with a proposed plant limit of under 99 plants to stay under the federal radar.

Local regulation of cannabis is the citizens' answer to economic collapse and criminalization. Mendocino County would benefit economically and lead the way as a regulatory model for the rest of the state.

Benefits of outdoor growing have deep roots in natural world

Continued from page 7

health effects in humans; but perhaps more importantly, they threaten the food chain. Healthy plants resist pests and disease. While pests are present in an outdoors garden, natural predators are abundant and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques are more effective.

The powdery mildew challenge is second only to aphids/mites for indoor cannabis crops. Fungus can attack during the growth cycle or when plants are drying or the harvest curing. Building mold also likes moist, warm garden conditions —

and it causes property damage that costs money to clean up and can lead to health problems. Even well-ventilated rooms cannot replicate the sanitizing value of dry air and bright sunshine.

Lights, fans, timers, tanks, pumps, containers, grow media, special nutrients, property damage, and energy all cost money. It can take several crops to recover the investment; one mistake or accident can result in a total loss or even worse, and may include costly property damage. With organic, outdoor-grown cannabis the only cost is fertilizer, seed, water and IPM.



HIGH GRADE MEDICINE — Harborside is the first dispensing collective to test and post the THC content of its material. Other details are available on request. The Medical Cannabis Safety Commission is encouraging others to follow suit. Photo courtesy of Harborside Health Center

Harborside launches lab testing program

Concentrates found to contain more CBD than do flowers

By **Shiloh Brotherman** Harborside CEO

In mid-December 2008, Harborside Health Center became the first dispensary in California to offer laboratory testing of its medicine. All flowers and concentrates distributed by the Oakland collective are now laboratory tested for safety and potency. It uses plate culture analysis to detect pathogenic molds invisible to the human eye, which may pose a health hazard to patients with compromised immune systems. Potency tests use gas chromatography/mass spectrometry/flame ionization detection to measure the percentages of three major cannabinoids: THC, CBD, and CBN.

Harborside CEO Steve DeAngelo greeted the program with enthusiasm "For first time in the history of human cannabis consumption, patients have a scientific assessment of the safety and potency of their medicine prior to ingesting it."

The program is the result of a long and painstaking development process, undertaken in partnership with the Analytical Laboratory Project. The seeds of the program were planted at the 2007 NORML conference, when ALP founders David Lampach and Addison DeMoura met life-long activist DeAngelo.

"Everybody we talked to said it had been tried before, but that it was impossible" said Lampach, "We never believed that; and when we met Steve, he agreed and encouraged us to develop the testing program. So we took the plunge and started purchasing equipment."

Over the course of the next 18 months, ALP developed analytical methods in partnership with a senior bio-chemist from one of the Bay Area's most prestigious research institutions. Additional scientific oversight is provided by London's Institute of

Psychiatry and the University of the City of London, in a partnership with the internationally renowned Beckley Foundation.

The ultimate goal of the partnership is the development of a comprehensive database to compile patient evaluations of tested medicine samples. This database could one day identify the most therapeutically active components in the cannabis plant, and guide future development of cannabinoid medicines. Lady Amanda Neidpath, Director of the Beckley Foundation, commented, "It could very well be a scientific gold mine." After a short beta phase at Harborside, ALP will extend the testing program to dispensaries, collectives, and growers state-wide.

Results so far show that most of the medicine presented to Harborside is free of pathogenic molds; but some samples have traces of the *aspergillus* mold — possibly fatal to patients with very seriously compromised immune systems. Harborside returns to the grower all items found to contain any *aspergillus* and any that exceed American Herbal Products Assn. standards for mold content. Harborside THC content has ranged from 5.18 to 87.60 percent (including care packages and concentrates), with most flower varieties falling between 15 and 25 percent, and most concentrates between 20 and 80 percent.

Levels of CBD, a cannabinoid of intense interest to researchers, vary markedly between flowers and concentrates. CBD levels in flowers generally have been less than 1 percent, while concentrates — often made from leaf material — have up to three times more. Because researchers and some patients believe CBD has great therapeutic potential, this may be the most important finding of the program so far.



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The Lab Bench

Major HIV/AIDS research findings on cannabis

By Jahan Marcu*

Promising research demonstrates that cannabis could be used for neuropathic pain, inhibiting HIV replication, and fighting drug-resistant bacterial infections.

Two clinical studies on smoked cannabis for HIV neuropathy

A study published by a research team at UC Davis Medical Center [1] was conducted as a double blind, placebo-controlled crossover study of 38 patients with HIV neuropathic pain. The Participants smoked medicine with a THC content of seven percent or 3.5 percent. They were scheduled for three 6-hour sessions, which were separated by at least 3 days. Their pain was significantly alleviated and the side effects were well tolerated.

Another study was conducted and published by researchers at UC San Diego [2]. This study began with 34 patients who were not responsive to other pain medication. Over the course of the study, participants received both real and placebo cigarettes. The THC content ranged from one to eight percent and was smoked four times daily for five days. Treatment phases were interrupted by two weeks of no medication. The patients continued to use their regular pain medication during the whole study. The team found that 46 percent of the 28 patients in the study gained pain relief of more than 30 percent. These studies follow previous research findings on the same topic (Abrams et al. 2007).

Cannabis-extract component inhibits HIV replication

Research efforts to find new HIV treatments often focus on viral particles that are essential for HIV replication. Plant-derived natural products are emerging as potent anti-HIV compounds which can interfere with viral particles. Researchers from

Germany and Spain investigated cannabis tinctures and found extracts that inhibited HIV replication [3]. Denbinobin, a single compound, was demonstrated to be mostly responsible for the ability of the extract to inhibit HIV replication. Denbinobin was shown to directly interfere with a replication protein called NF-KB (NF-kappa B), which is considered a good target for HIV therapies because it contributes to a wide variety of cellular processes.

Cannabinoids kill antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria

Multi-drug resistant and extremely drug-resistant forms of bacteria have created a strong demand for new antibacterial drugs. In the US such strains are causing more deaths each year [4].

Developing a new antibacterial is very challenging. Only one has been introduced in the last 30 years. The antibacterial effects of cannabinoids have been documented for over 50 years, inspiring researchers in Italy to re-examine the effects of cannabinoids on these new and more dangerous forms of bacteria. The research team found that the five most common cannabinoids THC, CBD, CBG, CBC, and CBN had potent antibacterial effects. The authors conclude that mixtures of cannabinoids could also be used as cheap and biodegradable antibacterial agents.

* Email: cannabispodcast@gmail.com

Source notes for the above:

1. Wilsey, B., et al., 'A randomized, placebo-controlled, crossover trial of cannabis cigarettes in neuropathic pain.' *J Pain*, 2008. 9(6): p. 506-21.
2. Ellis, R.J., et al., 'Smoked medicinal cannabis for neuropathic pain in HIV: a randomized, crossover clinical trial.' *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 2009. 34(3): p. 672-80.
3. Sanchez-Duffhues, G., et al., 'Denbinobin, a naturally occurring 1,4-phenanthrenequinone, inhibits HIV-1 replication through an NF-kappaB-dependent pathway.' *Biochem Pharmacol*, 2008. 76(10): p. 1240-50.
4. Appendino, G., et al., 'Antibacterial cannabinoids from Cannabis sativa: a structure-activity study.' *J Nat Prod*, 2008. 71(8): p. 1427-30.

A look at cannabis, CBD, and blood pressure

Ask MedicalCannabisMD.com

By David Ostrow, MD

This issue's column responds to two related questions sent in by readers that illustrate the complexity of understanding how the 100+ active ingredients in whole cannabis produce different effects depending on the genetic strain, how and where it was grown and harvested, an individual's sensitivity to these different compounds, how much and by what route it was ingested and, as always, the setting in which it is used and what other drugs it may be combined with. To help answer these complex questions, Sunil Aggarwall, PhD, has provided most of the following information from his recently completed thesis on *The Medical Geography of Cannabinoid Botanicals in Washington State: Access, Delivery, and Distress*, available at sunilaggarwal.net.

Question 1: What is Cannabidiol (CBD) and do its effects on the body differ from THC?

A: There are over 100 compounds in whole cannabis — including at least 108 different cannabinoids (which, structurally, are 21-carbon terphenophenolics), flavonoids, sesquiterpenoids, and phytosterols — all pharmacologically active to varying degrees. A good general rule is that *indica* strains produce more CBD, and are better for chronic bodily pain and sedation; while *sativa* strains produce more THC and are better for antidepressant and energizing effects. But, as indicated above, these are only the two best-studied components of whole cannabis and the actual properties and effects of a particular strain or preparation, such as hash or kief, may depend more on the interplay between the total set of active ingredients — what Dr. Ethan Russo calls the “entourage effect.”

That is why medicinal cannabis users often find relief from not just depression or pain, but also inflammation, nausea/vomiting, and muscle spasticity. In addition,

basic and clinical researchers are testing whole cannabis and its components for anti-cancer and anti-aging properties.

Question 2: Is cannabis good for controlling blood pressure? Since it can make your heart beat faster, is there a risk of heart attack with cannabis use? A friend once passed out from using cannabis while drunk on wine. It was very scary and made me afraid to combine cannabis with alcohol.

A: Any drug that can lower blood pressure in some individuals and at specific doses, but produce the opposite effect in others or at different doses, is considered “biphasic.” Most often, this is related to dose — one phase of the drug effect predominates at lower doses while the other phase predominates at higher doses. But with whole cannabis, we are dealing with over 100 active compounds, so it is difficult to impossible to predict what dose will have what effect beforehand. Your friend who passed out was probably reacting more to the wine they consumed than to the cannabis. When used alone, cannabis usually causes a mild increase in heart rate (tachycardia) and an insignificant rise in blood pressure.

However, persons with a variety of heart conditions, particularly those with irregular heart rhythms (dysrhythmias) or uncontrolled abnormal blood pressure, can experience more severe changes in heart rate and blood pressure from cannabis, and thus should consult with their cardiologist (who, hopefully, is knowledgeable about the pharmacology of cannabis) before using it. While there are no reported deaths due to cannabis use, there have undoubtedly been persons whose abnormal blood pressure or heart rhythm was worsened by it. This can rarely, if not recognized, lead to a heart attack, stroke or even death.

Please send your questions to DOstrow@uchicago.edu, and we will endeavor to answer them in future columns.

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WEST COAST LEAF

Editorials and Commentary

Medical marijuana amnesty now

There seems to have come a shift. The amazing scene of President Obama following through on his campaign promises is chronicled in the pages of this issue of the *West Coast Leaf*. The end of federal medical marijuana raids here will finally allow communities to get past the fear of a federal crackdown and regulate cannabis responsibly. However, ending the raids does not end the suffering of providers already in prison: Dustin Costa, Ricardo Montes, Luke Scarmazzo, Stephanie Landa, and others. Nor does it block the sentencing of providers, like Charles Lynch, Eddy Lepp, Brian Epis, and others.

President Obama should adapt one of President Lincoln's key moves after the Civil War: Issue a general amnesty for all intrastate medical cannabis cases and order the DEA to end its raids in all medical marijuana states. While he's at it, he should also tell DEA to license ND farmers and allow the Lakota Nation to grow industrial hemp. That will enable states and localities to better regulate medical sales and consider other reforms.

The issue of cannabis amnesty grows all the more critical, from both the state and national perspectives. The Feds might limit it to medical marijuana, but the 'decim' states should go farther by freeing all non-violent cannabis prisoners.

California's Governor Schwarzenegger should be the first to issue an amnesty for his fellow cannabis consumers who have been arrested on adult cannabis charges or whose parole /probation was revoked for a positive drug test. Fat chance. Failing that, there are policy changes that other state employees can take on their own. Counties and cities can adopt the 100-square-foot garden guidelines and permit more dispensing collectives to open. DAs can stop filing charges, at least in low-level offenses. Judges can simply stop sending people to prison for cannabis. Probation and parole officers should never recommend a person be sent back to prison over trace metabolites in their urine. The legislature should add an age limit to the cannabis laws and exempt adults from all penalties. Other states can adopt a similar series of meaningful reforms.

A Presidential general amnesty would be a great way to get the ball moving.

Thank you, Assemblyman Ammiano

We thank you, San Francisco Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, for introducing AB 390 to set a legal age of consent for cannabis as 21 years, then tax and regulate sales to adults. In our opinion the tax is too high and the personal limit is too low; but the time is just right.

Calling cannabis-friendly candidates

The obstruction to reform in America is not so much the will of the voters, the courts' interpretations, or even the timidity of the legislature, but the failure of local enforcement to implement the laws fairly. *West Coast Leaf* would encourage our readers to consider laying the groundwork now to run for elected office, especially qualified people seeking the office of sheriff or district attorney. These posts determine how law enforcement prioritizes its resources. That is where the most incorrigible prohibitionists tend to entrench themselves. If you could do better than our current politicians, maybe you should become one.

Salvaging California's broken prison system

By Daniel Abrahamson* Drug Policy Alliance

Just a few short months ago, California had the opportunity to usher in solutions to prison overcrowding and add recidivism-reduction programs. Proposition 5 would have reduced prison spending by at least \$2.5 billion and increased good time credit opportunities, but lost at the ballot box, thanks to the prison lobby and nearly \$3.5 million that prison guards and their allies spent on misleading TV spots.

Now it's springtime. The prison population remains perilously high, and the state faces a likely population cap. According to a Feb. 9 tentative ruling by a three-judge federal panel overseeing the state's unconstitutionally-inadequate prisons, overcrowding is the primary culprit and the state must address it.

Legislative inaction led to this crisis — and it's the duty of the Legislature to pave the way out. Even the federal panel said it wants the state to identify the best way out of this overcrowding mess. It's time for legislators to revisit the expert-recommended proposals that would have become law

under Prop 5, the *Nonviolent Offender Rehabilitation Act*.

First, divert nonviolent drug offenders to treatment instead of incarceration — both from court and from parole — and stabilize funding. California has extensive experience with diversion under Prop 36, a highly successful program passed in 2000 by 61 percent of voters. In just seven years, Prop 36 graduated 84,000 people, saved taxpayers nearly \$2 billion and, according to independent UCLA evaluations, has reduced recidivism.

Second, emphasize recidivism-reduction programming and encourage participation through good time credits. The prison system currently provides virtually no meaningful rehabilitation or treatment services behind bars. The Inspector General found that what little drug treatment is provided is so poorly administered that it may do more harm than good; he called it a "billion dollar boondoggle."

Third, reduce the number of offenders under long-term parole supervision and stop sending technical violators back to prison (particularly where it comes to drug-addicted parolees). Almost all of the over 10,000 California offenders released from prison each month are placed on parole for three years. During that time, 70 percent are returned to prison — twice the national average. Prop 5 would have required local sanctions for some nonviolent parolees and allowed well-behaved nonviolent parolees to earn their way off of parole supervision.

Despite the ballot outcome, these ideas didn't stop being good ones in November. They appear in every serious proposal to reform this broken prison system, including *Please turn to page 14*

Phelps is another great role model for cannabis

By Paul Armentano* NORML

Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps joins a growing list of successful Americans who enjoy marijuana during their down time. This tabloid news story made international headlines. Phelps is hardly alone in his herbal inclinations. According to national and federal surveys, nearly one out of two Americans have tried weed.

Consumers include people from all walks of life. America's current President said he smoked cannabis regularly as a young man. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, former Vice President Al Gore, former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and astronomer Carl Sagan all admitted cannabis use.

According to the US government, 70 percent of current cannabis users are gainfully employed. Statistically, most cannabis users are successful academically and financially. A National Bureau of Economic Research study even reported that cannabis use is associated with earning higher wages.

Some former and current users — like Virgin tycoon Sir Richard Branson, Progressive Auto Insurance founder Peter Lewis, and New York State Mayor Michael Bloomberg — are even multi-millionaires.

Perhaps our fascination with this story is because Phelps is recognized as one of the most talented and successful athletes today. He holds the record for the most gold medals won by any athlete in history. Phelps isn't an anomaly in this regard either. Many top athletes use cannabis off the field — noting that it helps them to relax after the excitement of sports competition and alleviate the pain from nagging injuries. It won't leave them with a hangover or adversely impact their performance the next day.

A 2007 *New York Times* investigation estimated that up to 70 percent of pro-basketball players occasionally indulge in the use of pot. Many high profile football players — most notably Miami Dolphins star running-back Ricky Williams, former Dallas Cowboys all-star Mark Stepnoski, and even Super Bowl XLIII MVP Santonio



The British tabloid *News of the World* published the famous bong photo of Phelps.

Holmes have spoken candidly about their off-field cannabis use. Canadian snowboarder and 1998 Winter Olympics gold medal winner Ross Rebagliati tested positive for cannabis use in the days prior to his history-making performance.

There will always be some who will criticize Phelps because they believe the 14-time gold medalist is sending a poor message to young children—that you can smoke cannabis and still be successful in life. Well, sorry that the truth hurts.

According to a recent University of Alberta study, the majority of adults who use cannabis do so as a pastime to "enhance relaxation." Researchers concluded that their use is intended to enhance leisure activities and manage the challenges and demands of living in contemporary modern society. Participants reported using cannabis because it enhanced relaxation and concentration, making a broad range of leisure activities more enjoyable and pleasurable.

No doubt Michael Phelps indulged in the use of cannabis for these very same reasons. He ought not to be condemned for it nor branded a criminal for his actions. For that matter, neither should anyone else.

* Armentano is Policy Analyst for NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

Phelps, hypocrisy ... and the Kellogg's boycott

by Bruce Mirken* Marijuana Policy Project

Cereal giant Kellogg's announced in early February that it won't renew Olympic swimming champion Michael Phelps' endorsement contract because he's been photographed apparently smoking marijuana. While hypocrisy is hardly rare in American life, this struck many as a particularly egregious example.

It's causing thousands of Americans to swear off Rice Krispies and other Kellogg's products. A boycott endorsed by the Marijuana Policy Project, Drug Policy Alliance, National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws and others was launched in February.

"Michael's most recent behavior is not consistent with the image of Kellogg," a company spokesperson told Ad Age.

Bear in mind that in 2004, Phelps pleaded guilty to drunk driving. But apparently that offense — also illegal, and it actually might have resulted in someone being hurt or killed — was not an issue for Kellogg's.

As of this writing, baseball star Alex Rodriguez had not lost any of his endorsement deals even after admitting use of banned steroids — an overt attempt to cheat at his chosen sport.

That athletes drink is hardly news. If Phelps had been photographed hoisting a beer, no one would have said a word. Yet, there is simply no question that if one wants to relax with a mood-altering substance, cannabis is far safer than alcohol.

Alcohol is more addictive. According to the Institute of Medicine, 15 percent of

those who ever drink become dependent on alcohol; for cannabis, it's said to be nine percent (and for tobacco, 32 percent).

Alcohol is massively more toxic. Every year, people die from alcohol overdoses, too often in college drinking parties and the like. And the chronic effects of heavy alcohol use, like liver damage, kill thousands upon thousands more. There has never been a medically documented cannabis overdose fatality, and the chronic effects of even heavy cannabis use are relatively mild and decidedly non-lethal.

Unlike cannabis, alcohol tends to make users reckless, aggressive and violent. As a review in the journal *Addictive Behaviors* explained, "Alcohol is clearly the drug with the most evidence to support a direct intoxication-violence relationship. ... Cannabis reduces the likelihood of violence during intoxication..."

So a boycott is on. The reaction to MPP's initial email alert about it was huge.

Realistically, boycotts are hard to pull off, and many more fizzle out than succeed. But cannabis consumers are a huge market: According to federal surveys, 100 million Americans acknowledge having used it, and nearly 15 million admit using it in the past month. And millions more who don't use cannabis agree that prohibition is irrational and far more dangerous than cannabis itself.

If that sleeping giant has been awakened, it could get interesting; and Phelps could find new products to endorse.

* Mirken is director of communications for MPP, mpp.org

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Chris Conrad, executive editor
Mikki Norris, managing editor
PO Box 1716, El Cerrito CA 94530
WestCoastLeaf.com • 510-215-TEAM (8326)
Vol 2 No 1. Print run: 80,000 copies.
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WEST COAST LEAF

National and International Reports

UN drug summit faces shifting policies

The US approach to the global Drug War wears a crumbling facade as it approaches a United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs summit in Vienna from March 11 to 20. Holdover delegates from the Bush era were obstructing preliminary talks and almost derailed a new era cooperation with our allies in the European Union who support harm reduction measures and humane, evidence-based approaches, until they were given new marching orders by the new American ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice. To reflect the new administration's policy, she told them to at least support needle exchange programs for AIDS prevention. The high level meeting will bring together representatives from around the world to determine the international drug strategy for the next decade.

CIA played role in shooting down 15 civilian aircraft over Peru

American CIA spotters helped Peru's air force shoot down 15 small civilian aircraft suspected of carrying drugs, in many cases without warning and within three minutes of being sighted, according to a CIA report on the Clinton administration's *Airbridge Denial Program*. The secret program garnered attention in 2001 when it killed innocent American missionary Veronica Bowers and her infant daughter. The Bowers' plane landed after it was hit. Most planes crashed in the jungle so no one knows if any narcotics were on board.

Argentina to join Uruguay, Brazil, Bolivia in personal decrim

Argentina's Supreme Court has concluded that criminal penalties on personal use of cannabis or other drugs violate fundamental rights. However, Supreme Court Justice Carlos Fayt said on Dec. 30, 2008, "We must wait until February" to publish a decision on the matter. Reports indicate the ruling was delayed in order for the Court to reach a unanimous decision ruling the drug law unconstitutional. Meanwhile, the US Drug Enforcement Agency was ordered to leave Bolivia in November, and the last agents left Jan. 29. This stems from a policy dispute between the Bolivian government, which allows families to cultivate 100 square feet of coca for traditional uses, and the US hardline approach, epitomized in Mexico. Bolivia charged the DEA with meddling in their internal affairs.

Three Latin American former-presidents call for decrim

Former Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, César Gaviria of Columbia and Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico in February came out in a commission report to favor evaluating the decriminalization of cannabis for personal use. Acknowledging that the war on drugs has failed, they further condemned harsh, prohibitionist US drug policies that are based "on prejudices and fears and not on results." They propose strategies more in line with European models of harm reduction and prevention rather than US-style eradication, interdiction, and criminalization approaches that have proven to be ineffective in ending drug use, violence, corruption, and organized crime.

Virginia Asst. AG caught with cannabis hidden in gift wrap

Assistant Virginia Attorney General Steven Lederman was arrested Feb. 20 on charges of possessing cannabis with intent to distribute and carrying a concealed weapon. Norfolk Police allegedly found cannabis disguised as a Christmas gift in his van.

Medi-marijuana bicycle tour of US

By Mikki Norris West Coast Leaf

To spread awareness of the medical benefits of cannabis, — along with a message of peace and a call for an end to the war on cannabis — Ken Locke and his family have a leg up over prohibitionists.

They plan to pedal their bicycles across the USA, starting a cross-country 2009 *Tour for Compassion* at Peace Arch International Park in Blaine, Washington on May 15 at a 10 AM kickoff rally. The 111-day tour will take them from WA to events at points all along the way in OR, CA, NV, UT, CO, NE, IO, MO, IL, IN, OH, WV, MD, VA and wrapping up in Wilmington Beach, NC.

The Locke Family hopes to inspire others to ride with them along the way or otherwise offer support by way of sponsorships, endorsements, press conferences, media, etc. to make it a successful venture.

For more information, contact Locke at ken_locke2001@yahoo.com or visit his web page at facebook.com/people/Ken-Locke/1538616927



BICYCLE PILGRIMAGE — The Locke family will journey across the USA on bicycle to call for Peace, and an end to the War on Cannabis.

First MI clinics open, card program set for April launch

By Matthew Abel Attorney at Law

Nearly 200 people attended a public hearing on the *Michigan Medical Marijuana Act* the state Dept. of Community Health (DCH) held Jan. 5. Everyone who spoke had objections to some part of the the DCH draft regulations to implement the voter-passed initiative.

Revised proposed rules were published that were much more reasonable than the draft proposal. The new rules remove requirements that the grow location be specified, with DCH having the right to inspect. Instead, the proposed rules presume compliance with the law, rather than demanding inspection. Application forms should be available by April 4, and the first cards issued by late April.

At least two clinics have already opened in the Detroit metropolitan area since the law took effect Dec. 4, and there is talk of more. The MI Medical Marijuana Assn already has over 500 members. See info at michiganmedicalmarijuana.org.

The revised DCH rules next go to the state legislature's Joint Com. on Administrative Rules (J-CAR), with five members each from the House and Senate.

Broken prison system

Continued from page 13

ding the governor's. His proposal, passed by the Legislature in January as AB 8, would have made significant changes to sentencing, good time credits and the parole system. Though he vetoed AB 8 as part of a larger budget package, the proposal should be part of any future budget approved by the Legislature and governor.

California must not wait any longer. There's no mystery about what it will take to solve the state's prison crisis. All that's lacking is the political will.

* Abrahamson is the director of Legal Affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), and was a proponent of California's Prop 5 (Nonviolent Offender Rehabilitation Act).

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Argentinian reform movement gains momentum

By Mike Bifari and Alejandro Aldama

Argentina's homegrown cannabis activists got a big boost when well-respected author and activist Chris Conrad and his wife Mikki Norris, of the Cannabis Consumers Campaign, visited from the US during December and January.

The timing was perfect. Headlines in the most important newspapers heralded a Supreme Court decision giving a green light to depenalization, as the current law goes directly against constitutional rights. The Court is expected to give its final ruling by early March, shaping a new policy.

After weeks of activities, including conferences in three major cities on topics including medical cannabis, industrial hemp, adult markets, etc., and after receiving a great amount of media exposure, a conference in downtown Buenos Aires was the closing event of a successful tour.

For the relatively young Argentine movement, this visit was something to celebrate. We became friends, had a nice time and made a lot of media noise, speaking very proudly about this beloved plant.

"We got great coverage by the different media around the three major cities, because we are going through a very special moment of debate around depenalization in this country," said Sebastian Basalo, director of THC magazine, the first publication of its kind in Argentina.

Various groups and advocates from different cities were working hard to organize these conferences and achieve their successful outcomes.

There is a suspenseful silence as everyone waits for the next step. So far the gov-

ernment has set its direction very clearly towards a pro-human rights perspective in many conferences, like the one held last December, and also in many interviews of the apparent spokesman of the government on this issue, Inner State Minister Anibal Fernandez.

"We appreciate that they don't consider us criminals anymore but we're still going to proclaim in the Million Marijuana March in Cordoba that we must continue to fight for recognition of medical marijuana and safe cannabis access for medical purposes," said Edith Moreno, of Agrupacion Cogollos in Cordoba.

"The government does not recognize cannabis for medical purposes yet and didn't say anything about the issue."

As the government shifts to a harm-reduction policy, this will make a difference on an international level, as this new human-rights and harm-reduction approach begins to clash with the "War on Drugs" ideology.

We feel very optimistic about the next meeting in Austria, Vienna 2009. We believe that many countries can follow Argentina's and Uruguay's lead in promoting this new direction in drug policies for Latin American communities.

The success of hosting the first two well known international activists to tour Argentina is more proof that the movement is global and grows bigger everyday.



ARGENTINA RISING — Chris Conrad and Mikki Norris were hosted by Mike Bifari, shaved head, and visited the activist group *Cogollos* in Cordoba (left) and THC magazine (above). West Coast Leaf photos.



Hawaiian patients hopeful for legislative relief

By Andrea Tischler* Americans for Safe Access

Patients and activists from the Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii, Maui-based Patients Without Time and Big Island Americans for Safe Access held early hopes for two proposed medical cannabis bills that had been passed by House committees, but were not scheduled by the House Judicial Committee; and no action has yet been taken by the Senate.

The two medical bills would create a distribution system and increase the caregiver to patient ratio, which is now only one-to-one. HB 1191 would allow certified facilitators at a secure growing facility to grow seven mature plants with one ounce of usable cannabis per plant for no more than 14 qualifying patients and possess no more than 98 plants. The bill calls for a tightly controlled production and distribution system. Maui Rep. Joe Bertram, a strong supporter of establishing a mechanism that allows people with physician-approved medical needs for the drug to obtain it introduced the legislation.

House Bill 226 would increase the caregiver-to-patient ratio to 1:5 and the number of mature plants to 12 with seven ounces of usable cannabis at any given time. It also restricts confidential patient information to appear on the registry card. That bill has limited governmental involvement but has not been scheduled yet.

Another bill, HB 1635, would have limited qualifying conditions to cancer, glaucoma and HIV/AIDS but was defeated.

Republican Gov. Linda Lingle — citing

Bush-era federal policies — has vowed to veto any legislation that would make medical cannabis more accessible to patients, even though the signals coming from Washington have changed.

The decrim bill, HB 1192, would make the possession of less than one ounce of cannabis a civil offense and impose a fine, but it missed the vote deadline after passing other House committees.

On the Big Island citizens in November easily approved an initiative to make cannabis the county's lowest law enforcement priority for up to a total of 25 or fewer plants for personal use. The ordinance was spearheaded by Project Peaceful Sky. Additionally, it prohibits the county council from accepting federal funds for Operation Green Harvest, which uses the grant money to seek out and destroy cannabis plants. The new law is a breakthrough for the state in softening strictly enforced cannabis laws. Although there are challenges by the local police and prosecutors, organizers have confidence that the law will work. They are now meeting with officials to see that an oversight committee is appointed.

There is hope that both medical and decriminalization legislation advances and that citizens will continue to fight to ensure that registered patients have safe access to their medicine.

* Tischler is chair of the Big Island Chapter of Americans for Safe Access. Contact her at andreatischler@yahoo.com

Denver marijuana prosecutions take plunge

By Anne Catto SAFER

Prosecutions dropped 21 percent in 2008, the year following voters' adoption of "lowest law enforcement priority" law and establishment of city review panel, reaching the lowest rate since 2005, according to the Denver City Attorney's Office.

Director of Prosecution Vince DiCroce presented statistics to the Feb. 4 Denver Marijuana Policy Review Panel meeting. The City Attorney's Office is required to provide the Panel with cannabis possession statistics every six months.

Prosecutions fell from 2,105 in 2007, to 1,658 in 2008, the year Mayor John Hickenlooper appointed the City panel to implement, monitor and report on the new ordinance. Last May, it recommended the city halt prosecutions for adult cannabis possession, and in August it called on city

police to refrain from citing adults during the Democratic National Convention.

The new trend in cannabis prosecutions is not the result of fewer arrests for other offenses. DiCroce speculated that the number of charges filed for all offenses likely increased or held steady in 2008.

"Our city punished far fewer adults for marijuana possession this year, yet the sky did not fall," said Mason Tvert, a member of the Panel and the executive director of Safer Alternative For Enjoyable Recreation. SAFER was behind the successful ballot measure. "Hopefully this is just the beginning of Denver's shift toward a more rational approach to marijuana.

"It's time to stop these prosecutions altogether and allow adults to make the safer choice to use marijuana instead of alcohol, if that's what they prefer."

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WEST COAST LEAF

West Coasterdam Calendar & Directory

Upcoming events

March 17, *Medical Cannabis Safety Com.* Public meeting, Oaksterdam Univ. Student Union, 1915 Broadway, Oakland.

March 21, *Cannabis Unity Conference II* Buddy Dozey's Place, 2242 Ralston Ave. , Simi Valley, Sat, 2 pm. For info: 805-583-8414

March 21-22, *OU Advance 102 Course, LA* Oaksterdam Univ, Los Angeles campus. Patient ID Center. OaksterdamUniversity.com for class schedules and location. 510-251-1544

March 26, *Spliff Magazine Launch Party* Party 8 PM - 2 am , Lot 613, 613 Imperial St, LA RSVP at SpliffMagazine.com, \$20.

March 30, *Medical Cannabis Assn (MCA)* Meet and greet, 6 pm. OU Student Union, 1915 Broadway, Oakland. MedicalCannabisAssociation.org

April 4, *Hash Bash, Ann Arbor* "38th Annual Hash Bash," Ann Arbor, MI

April 5, *Joint Rolling Contest, Isla Vista* Anisq'Oyo Park, Isla Vista, CA 93117, 1-6 PM, sponsored by NORML@UCSB, Live music, raf-fles, free. For more info, scui@umail.ucsb.edu.

April 18-19, *OU Basic 101 course, LA* Oaksterdam Univ. see above. 510-251-1544.

April 24-26, *SSDP West Coast conference* UC Berkeley chapter hosts. ssdp.org, 415-875-9463.

April 25-26, *Expert Witness Training with Chris Conrad*, Oaksterdam University campus, Oakland. For details, see chrisconrad.com

April 20, *Fabulous 4/20 events* TBA. Stay tuned, check with local groups.

May 1, *Oregon MMJ Festival, Salem* Oregon NORML and Medical Marijuana Program cardholders celebrate at the State Capitol Gallery in Salem. 503-239-6110.

May 1-3, *CannaTrade, Basel, Switzerland* Int. Cannabis Hemp Fair. Messe Basel, Hall 5. cannatrade.C.H info@cannatrade.C.H

May 2, *Global Cannabis March, Portland* Portland Pioneer Courthouse Square,



Stephanie Benseman delivers the Leaf in LA

ornorml.org, 503-239-6110. Locate an event near you: marijuanamarch.org.

May 2, *Global Marijuana March, San Fran* San Francisco Cannabis Day at Joseph Alioto Plaza (Civic Center Plaza) across from SF City Hall) SF. Live music from 1 pm to 6:30 pm

June 4, *MPP Party at the Playboy Mansion* MPP's 4th Annual Party at the Playboy Mansion. See mpp.org for details.

June 13 - 14, *THC Expo,* Los Angeles Convention Center with Aaron McGruder, Joe Rogan, DJ Pooh, Bill Maher, info@thcexpo.com, thcexpo.com

June 24, *Medical Cannabis Association Public* Meet and Greet, Patient ID Center, Los Angeles Office 470 S San Vicente Blvd. 1st floor, LA 90048 323-852-1039, 8 PM.

Aug. 15-16, *Seattle Hempfest, WA* Myrtle Edwards Park, Seattle. See hempfest.org for details.

Sept. 23-26, *NORML National Conference* San Francisco, CA Details TBA, norml.org, vendors and sponsors invited. 888-67-NORML.

Oct 2-3, *Fifth IACM Conference, Germany* Conference on Cannabinoids in Medicine; Int. Assn for Cannabis as Medicine's 2009 meeting, Holiday Inn, Cologne. cannabis-med.org

Nov. 11 - 14, *DPA Reform Conference, NM* The International Drug Policy Reform Conference. hosted by Drug Policy Alliance. Convention Center, Albuquerque NM. drugpolicy.org, drugpolicyevent.com, sjones@drugpolicy.org



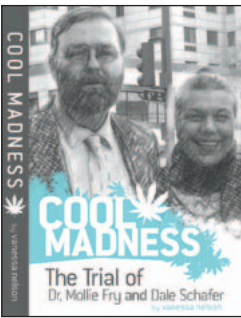
DOUBLY HONORED — Jahan Marcu received two awards Jan. 21 from a graduate research competition at Temple University. Left to Right: Steven Popoff Ph.D (Chairperson), Marcu, Mary Abood Ph.D, Lynn Kirby Ph.D. Read about his research in the upcoming issue of O'Shaughnessy's Journal of Medical Cannabis. Photo courtesy of Jahan Marcu.



HEMP FOR VICTORY — Host Richard Marcella (center) wrapped up the last program of his long-lived cable TV series by interviewing his guests Lisa Snaduole and George Clayton Johnson. Photo courtesy of Hemp for Victory.

A tragic saga of justice and democracy betrayed

By Dustin Costa Drug War POW



Cool Madness
By Vanessa Nelson
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Cancer survivor Dr. Mollie Fry and her hemophiliac husband, attorney Dale Schafer, became medical cannabis caregivers in the town of Cool, CA, after they discovered the benefit of cannabis for their own medical conditions. They sought out and obtained the apparent approval to provide services from local law enforcement, who turned around and supplied information to federal investigators.

Writer and activist Vanessa Nelson continues her tradition of accurate and compelling court reporting of medical cannabis trials in her second book, *Cool Madness*. For four years Nelson has kept people informed with lively accounts of the legal ordeals of providers such as Ed Rosenthal, Eddy Lepp and others. *Cool Madness* gives

a stunning, blow by blow portrayal of how a ruthless and vicious prosecution transformed Fry and Schafer from compassionate caregivers into convicted felons.

Fry and Schafer were raided in late 2001 by the DEA, but were not indicted until June 2005, after an adverse Supreme Court decision (*Gonzales v Raich*) cleared the way for their prosecution.

Nelson breaks down the trial into neat, discrete elements. At jury selection the deck was hopelessly stacked against them. In a state favoring medical use by a four to one ratio, no prospective juror who expressed support was impaneled. Nelson presents a complete chronicle of courtroom antics from opening arguments to the testimony of prosecution and defense witnesses. You feel like you were there.

Despite the many valiant efforts by defense attorneys Tony Serra and Laurence Lichter to work the issue of "medical" cannabis into a defense, it was not to be. Schafer said in his sentencing statement: "Neither my wife nor I had the specific intent to commit a crime." Unfortunately for Schafer and Fry, the lack of specific intent are not defenses in a drug case.

At their sentencing, renowned attorney Please turn to page 19

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Helping Others is not limited to providing food, shelter, and so forth but includes relieving the basic causes of suffering and providing the basic causes of happiness. -Dalai Lama-

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Local and regional meetings

Berkeley Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Tuesdays at 8 at 79 Dwinelle Hall, UCB. Contact Rishi at rmalhotra@berkeley.edu 951-543-6257.

Compassionate Coalition, Sac. third Tues/ month 7 PM at Crusaders Hall 320 Harris Ave, # H Sacto, Nathan@compassionatecoalition.org.

East Bay NORML, third Thurs/ mo. 7:30 PM (after Measure Z Oversight Com.), O'dam U Student Union, 1915 Broadway, Oakland. canorml@canorml.org

El Dorado Co. Alliance for Medical Marijuana, fourth Saturday/ mo., 2:15-4:20, Garden Valley Grange, 4940 Marshall Rd., 530-621-2874

Marijuana Anti-Prohibition Project Coachella Valley Area MAPP meets first Sat / mo. 3 PM, location TBA. Call Lanny 760-799-2955.

Western Inland Empire Area MAPP/ASA,

first Wed / mo., 7:30 PM, THCF Medical Clinic, 647 Main St. Riverside, CA 92501

High Desert Area MAPP/ ASA, third Wed/ mo. 6:30 p.m. Castle Inn, 1388 N. Golden Slipper near Landers 92285. Lanny 760-799-2055

Oakland Measure Z Oversight Committee third Thurs/ mo. 6 PM, City Hall.

Orange County NORML meets in Fullerton call 1-877-OC NORML for info., ocnorml.org

Claremont/ Pitzer College SSDP, Mon. 7 PM, Gold Student Ctr # 108 bennett.cross@gmail.com

Santa Barbara UCSB NORML meets every Wed 7:30 PM, North Hall 1105, UCSB

SF Axis of Love Every Tues 4pm, 223a Ninth St. at Howard, SF. axisoflovesf@gmail.com

Local and regional Americans for Safe Access meetings

East Bay ASA, fourth Wed/ mo. 7 PM, at ASA headquarters, 1322 Webster St, #402, in Oakland. Contact george@safeaccessnow.org.

Fresno ASA, second Mon/ mo. 6 PM at Full Circle Brewing Co, 620 F St., Fresno. Contact fresnocagal@sbcglobal.net

Humboldt County ASA second Thurs/ mo. 6 PM, Bayview Courtyard Senior Housing, 550 Union St., Arcata. asa-humboldt@sbcglobal.net.

LA ASA, 3rd Sat/ mo., 1 PM, Patient ID Center, 470 S. San Vicente Bl, LA. Contact Don@safeaccessnow.org

Marin ASA meets second Wed/ mo. 7 PM, at Scott Candell Law, 4040 Civic Center Dr., San Rafael Contact Scott: candell@sflegalhelp.com

Orange County ASA third Wed / mo. 7 PM, 922 Williamson Ave, Fullerton. Channa.ocasa@yahoo.com

Sacramento ASA first Tues/ mo. 7 PM, Crusaders Hall, 320 Harris Ave., Suite H, Sacto Contact cannacare@earthlink.net.

San Diego ASA second Tue. / mo., 7 PM International Cannabis U, 6070 Mt. Alifan Suite 202 San Diego. Contact 4cccp@cox.net

San Francisco ASA second & fourth Tues 7:30-9pm, Bowers Pizza on 11th St, SF. Contact: dcgoldman@yahoo.com

Sonoma ASA first Thurs/ mo. 5 PM, Dept. of Health-So City View Rm., 625 5th St, Sta Rosa. Contact sarah@americansforsafeaccess.org

Society, Passages, Announcements

Sistuh Somayah; Sickle Cell patient, LA provider, organizer

Somayah Kambui at her 2002 medical marijuanatrial. West Coast Leaf photo.



A colorful Los Angeles area activist, Sistuh S o m a y a h Kambui died Nov. 27, 2008. She was one of the few people ever to win a medical cannabis case by California jury nullification. After hearing of her efforts to help African Americans suffering from sickle cell, including her own admissions of breaking the law to grow and provide cannabis for poor and desperate patients, an LA jury acquitted her in 2002. Police nonetheless continued to harass Kambui and raided her garden several times in the years following her acquittal.

Somayah Kambui led an eventful life, both before and after her trial. A member of the Black Panther Party in the 1970s, she suffered from sickle cell anemia, an extremely painful affliction that affects people in the African American communi-

ty. When she found she got relief through cannabis and hempseed oil, Kambui made it a point to tell others and was perhaps the first to recognize and popularize cannabis for the treatment of sickle cell patients.

Kambui was convinced of the highly religious nature of the cannabis plant herb, drawing connections to Egyptian mythology and hieroglyphic art. She founded the *Nigritian Kief Society* and the *Crescent Alliance Self Help For Sickle Cell*.

Kambui was a musician and the driving force behind the LA Million Marijuana March. See geocities.com/sistersomayah

LaBow - Lentz nuptuals

Sabrina LaBow married noted Los Angeles cannabis attorney Jacek Lentz at a private ceremony held in Las Vegas, NV on Valentines Day, Feb. 14. Prior to forming his own law firm last year, Lentz worked with Eric Shevin as partner at Shevin & Lentz, Attorneys At Law, in West Hollywood, California.



Reform organizations of interest

AMERICANS FOR SAFE ACCESS www.safeaccessnow.org / A patient support network. 510-251-1856

AXIS OF LOVE SF/ Activist Resource Center Patients organizing for their rights and access 223 A 9th St, SF, 415-240-5247

BEDPC Black and Brown Equitable Drug Policies Coalition, Redstone Building, Suite #209, 2940 16th Street, SF. 24 hr bilingual Spanish Hotline: 415-595-8251, street actions, support groups, incident reporting, advocacy

CALIFORNIA NORML Directories, news, alerts. canorml.org/ 510-540-1066 dale@canorml.org

CANNABIS ACTION NETWORK cannabisactionnetwork.org/ 1605 Ashby Ave, Berkeley. 510-486-8083

CANNABIS CONSUMERS CAMPAIGN cannabisconsumers.org/ Come out of the closet to stand up for equal rights.

CIVIL LIBERTIES MONITORING PROJECT civil liberties.org/ monitors police eradication abuses, etc, to protect civil rights in the CA northcoast, 707-923-4646

COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION 115 North State Street #1 Ukiah 95482 707-467-3888.

DRUG REFORM COORDINATION NETWORK stopthedrugwar.org/ drcnet.org, global support network for drug policy reformers with weekly analysis

DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE drugpolicy.org/ DPA works on drug policies based on science, compassion, health, human rights and a just society free from prohibition.

DRUG POLICY FORUM OF CA Listserve for Cal cannabis / drug war issues. To sign up: drugsense.org/ dpfca/list.htm

DRUGSENSE drugsense.org/ A daily compilation of drug-related news excerpts.

DRUG TRUTH NETWORK drugtruth.net/ Radio shows: Cultural Baggage and 4:20 Drug War News, interviews

DRUG WAR FACTS drugwarfacts.org/ Just the facts.

FAMILIES AGAINST MANDATORY MINIMUMS famm.org/ Advocates an end to harsh, unjust sentencing laws and prisoners/ families affected by them

FAMILY COUNCIL ON DRUG AWARENESS fcda.org/ Accurate information on effects of drugs and drug policies. Downloadable PDFs to print and hand out.

GREEN AID green-aid.com/ Marijuana Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

HARM REDUCTION COALITION harmreduction.org/ works to reduce drug-related harm by programs such as clean needle exchange.

HEMP INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION hempindustries.org/ The HIA is a non-profit trade group representing hemp companies, researchers and supporters.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE DRUG WAR hr95.org/ Photo display of Drug War POWs, analyzes human rights abuses

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST PROHIBITION leap.cc/ Current and former members of law enforcement who support drug regulation rather than prohibition.

LEGAL SERVICES FOR PRISONERS w/ CHILDREN prisonerswithchildren.org/ Advocates for the human rights and empowerment of incarcerated parents, children, family members and people at risk for incarceration.

MARIJUANA POLICY PROJECT MPP mpp.org/ national membership org. focuses on removing criminal penalties for cannabis through initiatives and legislation

MENDO MEDICAL MARIJUANA ADVISORY BOARD, mmmab.net/ coalition with a Northern CA network, PO Box 2555 Mendocino 95410. info@mmmab.net.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENTS UNION PO Box 2059 Ft Bragg 95437, 707-964-9377. pebblestrippet@sbcglobal.net. Patients' Rights Network; Highway litter pick-up service.

MEDIA AWARENESS PROJECT mapinc.org/ Have your voice heard; MAP has helped generate millions of letters to the editor. Help gather news for their clearing house.

MOTHERS AGAINST MISUSE AND ABUSE mamas.org/ honest, responsible drug education

MAPS maps.org/ Multidisciplinary Association on Psychedelic Studies, 10424 Love Creek Rd., Ben Lomond, CA 95005, 831-336-4325, 501c3 does studies on cannabis, psychedelics.

NORML norml.org/ National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. The original membership activist group; info, legal referrals and annual convention. 202-483-5500

NOVEMBER COALITION november.org/ National support group for Drug War POWs. Publishes *The Razor Wire*.

OREGON GREEN FREE Free OMMP info. oregongreenfree.net

OREGON NORML ornorml.org

PATIENT ADVOCACY NETWORK panorg.blogspot.com.

SAFER saferchoice.org/ Safer Alternative For Enjoyable Recreation. PO Box 40332, Denver CO 80204, mason@saferchoice.org

SENSIBLE COLORADO, DENVER sensiblecolorado.org / non-profit resource for patients and those interested in reforming marijuana laws. 720-890-4247

STUDENTS FOR A SENSIBLE DRUG POLICY ssdp.org/ Students seeking to reduce the harms caused by drug abuse and drug policies.

VOTEHEMP votehemp.com/ Industrial, horticultural hemp.

VOTER POWER, OREGON voterpower.org, 503-224-3051, Portland. 541-245-6634, Medford

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Two documentaries look at cannabis; mixed results

By John Thomas Ellis West Coast Leaf

Two cable networks took a look at the cannabis issue recently, and they came up with decidedly mixed results.

In National Geographic's *Marijuana Nation* viewers take the journey of a lifetime. After laying out the historical perspective to 100 years of propaganda and persecution, the narrator notes that 'weed' is relatively benign. With music in the background, she waxes poetic: "Today's marijuana has never been more valuable or potent. Law enforcement fights it. Cannabis clubs flourish and obsessed agriculturalists are perfecting its botany. Breathe deep; this is not your father's marijuana."

Every aspect of the subject is explored, starting at being the most widely-used illicit substance in the world, at 200 million consumers. The 20-year war of prohibition has transformed the US Forestry service into a military effort to eradicate cannabis. In Canada, British Columbia's 'Prince of Pot' Mark Emery introduces us to the commercial side via Sam Malachi at the largest legal indoor operation in the world, and the education really begins.

The viewer is artfully taken from genetics to police raids, industrial hemp, American history and drug policy in minutes. Medical use is explored through patients, doctors and researchers who struggle for acceptance and efficacy in the middle of a senseless drug war. The focus then turns to California where the cannabis industry trumps wine.

Then on to Oaksterdam, where honorary mayor Richard Lee wheels through dispensaries, shops and Oaksterdam University, where a new generation of activists

and entrepreneurs learn career skills.

Unfortunately, CNBC's *Marijuana Inc: Inside America's Pot Industry* gave a distorted view of a legitimate and profitable business in a patent cry for the return of the fairness doctrine.

A thriving and prosperous cottage industry grows in lush Mendocino County, where the report said 60 percent of income is cannabis related, keeping families and possibly the county in the black, financially. With the Golden Gate Bridge as a backdrop, it spent way too much time on a former smuggler who told tales of those dusty days of yesteryear. Other parts, however, were little more than disinformation and innuendo. Camera-hungry narcs described a wild crime wave, pitbulls and all, pointed out a site that looked like it had been smashed up by DEA as being an eco-disaster, and blamed the farmers. Meanwhile, the only real crime depicted was a tape where a grower was the victim, robbed at gunpoint, calling 911 for help.

They even tried to weave activist Richard Lee of *Oaksterdam University* and the TV series *Weeds* into some absurd suburban garden conspiracy, giving short-shift to Lee's many contributions to the patients and city of Oakland.

The premise was more like fictional reality TV than an accurate report on a business sector that produces America's number one cash crop at \$35 billion, out-producing wheat, corn and soybeans. If CNBC could generate that kind of capital their parent corporation GE might not be hemorrhaging money.



California Chronicles of Medical Marijuana

Filmmaker had key access to reform activists

By Scott James



Burch's documentary features Brownie Mary Rathburn, Dr. Tod Mikuriya (inset), and others.

In her new film, *California Chronicles of Medical Marijuana*, Berkeley filmmaker Claire Burch and editor Chris Sorrenti roll up a blunt assessment of political and social issues surrounding the medical cannabis movement. Featuring a wide cast of key players weighing in on issues, from horticulturalists and activists to doctors and lawyers, the film delivers a compelling socio-historical perspective.

Beginning with a rousing speech from San Francisco's own 'Brownie Mary' Rathburn, the late hospital volunteer who dedicated decades to baking cannabis foods for AIDS and cancer patients, the documentary dovetails into a valuable primer on the intricate web of medical cannabis issues. Enduringly hopeful, the film is packed full of inspiring words from doctors, providers, and patients without avoiding the harsh realities of legal and

social issues. This film humanizes the movement by focusing on real people in the context of Prop 215, tackling frustrating legal issues around cannabis dispensaries and exposing how enforcement differs between California and federal authorities.

Based on a strong, broad interview base, *Chronicles* is packed full of powerful perspectives. Highlights include the final interview with Dr. Tod Mikuriya, the late, highly influential cannabis physician, and a speech by San Francisco DA Terrence Hallinan. Leaders from groups like FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums), NORML (National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws), and others delve into how legal struggles planted the seeds for their current medical cannabis activism. *West Coast Leaf's* own Chris Conrad and Mikki Norris each give candid, passionate interviews.

Drawing from a deep archive of video from hemp festivals, protests, smoke-ins and police activity, the film vividly illustrates California activism. Part passionate declaration and part historical document, *Chronicles* explores the movement's history and shows due respect to its frequently misunderstood people and politics.

In the end, this documentary does justice by telling a story that needs to be told with courage, respect and strength.

Available for purchase at: Amazon.com or Regentpress.net

Marijuana Medical Handbook update a must-read

By John Thomas Ellis

The Marijuana Medical Handbook

By Gieringer, Rosenthal and Carter (Quick American, 2008)



This is a well-written, well-conceived, must-read book. As a patient, I was quite surprised by what I didn't know.

Dale Gieringer Ph.D, Ed Rosenthal and Gregory T. Carter, M.D. start with a couple reassuring facts: Marijuana, in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man. No deaths from cannabis have ever been recorded. They evoke a thorough, reassuring and accurate list of facts, history and politics in the field.

Patients and caregivers need to have a copy of this handbook at the ready. Every aspect was covered including the liabilities of abuse, addiction, over use and emotional dependency. They look at science and

the law. Medicinal uses were explained in terms that were not misleading or preachy. They debunk myths and assuage concerns.

Brevity limited the chapters on growing to a description of the plant, its life cycle, and botany. They quickly cover seeds, clones and whether to grow indoors or out. Drying and curing was short and to the point, but the footnotes encouraged research, as do the writers themselves.

I wouldn't want to learn how to roll a joint from a book, but they even gave that a go. The writers explain the process of using joints, pipes, water pipes and vaporizers. Cooking and preparing food or drink different products were easy to follow recipes. Everything from bud flour to tinctures, extracts, oils and butters were explained in enough detail for a patient to begin a successful regimen and find some relief.

The chapter on adverse effects, real and imaginary, should be mandatory reading for every doctor, judge, police-person and legislator. It could save us all a lot of grief.

Cool Madness captures capricious cruelty of Fed prosecution

Continued from page 17

Tony Serra declared: "I am woefully sad and angered by the United States of America when they prosecute medical marijuana. It reminds me of Nazi Germany. We are not Rome throwing Christians to the lions. We are on the side of evolution, not devolution, which is on the other side of the podium here. Lady Justice weeps today, Your Honor." *Cool Madness* is Exhibit A of the bias, cruelty, and unfairness of government policy toward cannabis.

Cool Madness is a ripping good story, well written and even entertaining. It should serve as a call to action for all who cherish privacy, justice, human rights and

dignity – the things America should be all about, but sometimes isn't. It is an example of the conflict between State and Federal law and the nightmare that is visited upon innocents caught in the middle.

I highly recommend you read this book. Then do something to end the madness. That *would* be cool.

Editor's Note: Dr. Fry and Dale Schafer were sentenced to five years in prison on March 19, 2008. They are out on bail pending their appeals. Dustin Costa was not so lucky. He is currently serving a federal (medical) marijuana sentence with a release date of 2018. You can write to him at: Dustin Robert Costa, #62406-097, FCI Big Spring, 1900 Simler Avenue, Big Spring TX 79720.

Late spring gardening tips

Continued from page 9

grow-bags has hazards that pots do not.

Terracotta uses more water than plastic, but plastic has chemicals most of us would want to avoid. Containers need to be anchored down for windy conditions; and watch for roots probing into the earth, especially if you have to move them fast.

Yes, arbingers of spring abound, but remember that frost can linger — and so does 'the Man.' Caution guides the wise to cover one's tracks. Those who heed this warning can only accomplish creating healthy blooms and great buds.

As always, please be safe out there.

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