

## Pot of Gold



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March 15, 2010

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The next issue of  
Capitol Journal will be  
available on March 22nd.

### Top Story

*Lawmakers have taken a softer stance in recent years toward marijuana use for seriously ill people. But with their coffers up in smoke, states are now seriously looking at how pot may help move their budgets off of life support.*

## SNCJ Spotlight

### Could the Great Recession alter states' tough stance on marijuana?

The use of marijuana has been tightly restricted in most states since the 1930s. But as a result of shifting public opinion and current fiscal realities, big changes in state policy on the drug are in the air.

State efforts to regulate marijuana date back to the early 1900s. By the mid-1930s, every state regulated the drug in some way, due largely to the passage of the Uniform State Narcotic Act. But in the 1970s, with marijuana in widespread use as a recreational drug, a number of states, including CALIFORNIA,



OREGON and NEW YORK, began reducing the criminal penalties for marijuana possession. In the late 1990s, states began legalizing the use of marijuana for medical reasons, although federal law, which classifies marijuana as a Schedule I controlled substance, still prohibits such use.

This past January, NEW JERSEY became the 14th state to legalize the use of marijuana for medical purposes. Several other states, including ALABAMA, DELAWARE, KANSAS, NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA and PENNSYLVANIA, are considering doing the same. HAWAII and RHODE ISLAND, meanwhile, are weighing reducing the penalties for marijuana possession from jail time to fines. And CALIFORNIA is actually debating the legalization of marijuana for recreational use.

One reason for the mounting wave of legislative activity may be the change in Americans' attitude toward legalization of the drug. In 1969, only 12 percent of the respondents to a Gallup Poll said marijuana should be made legal. But 44 percent of

**“We are absolutely in an important new era in which increasing majorities of Americans are not just questioning the wisdom and efficacy of marijuana prohibition but are demanding alternatives.”**

the respondents to a Gallup Poll last year favored legalization, and that was an eight point jump from 2005. Support for the use of marijuana for medical reasons is even stronger: 84 percent, according to an ABC News-*Washington Post* poll in January.

“We are absolutely in an important new era in which increasing majorities of Americans are not just questioning the wisdom and efficacy of marijuana prohibition but are demanding alternatives,”

said Stephen Gutwillig, CALIFORNIA director for the Drug Policy Alliance Network, which supports legalization of marijuana.

Advocates for legalization say another reason for the uptick in state activity is a shift in the federal government's stance on the issue. Last fall, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced that raiding medical marijuana facilities would be among the lowest priorities for U.S. law enforcement.

Kurt Gardinier, spokesman for the Marijuana Policy Project, which advocates for medical use of marijuana, called the shift “one of the most significant changes in federal drug policy in the last 30 years. It puts states at ease that they won't be in conflict with the federal government.”

Gardinier's cause was given a further boost in November, when the American Medical Association recommended that Congress drop marijuana's Schedule I classification. But the Obama administration isn't ready to make that move yet, maintaining that research is needed to deliver the drug's benefits in a non-smokable form.



“We have the safest medications in the world and it’s not a coincidence. We have an enviable process by which we approve medications, and that’s through the [Food and Drug Administration],” said Tom McLellan, deputy director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. “It’s a bad idea to approve medication by popular vote.”

The drug’s effectiveness as a medication, however, has worked in legalization’s favor, making supporters out of even some of the most hardened opponents. Jeff Studdard, a former school police officer and Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy, changed his thinking about the drug after trying it to ease pain and restore his appetite after breaking his back.

“I have stopped all my [other] pain meds now and I’ve gained weight. It’s almost like a wonder drug,” he said.

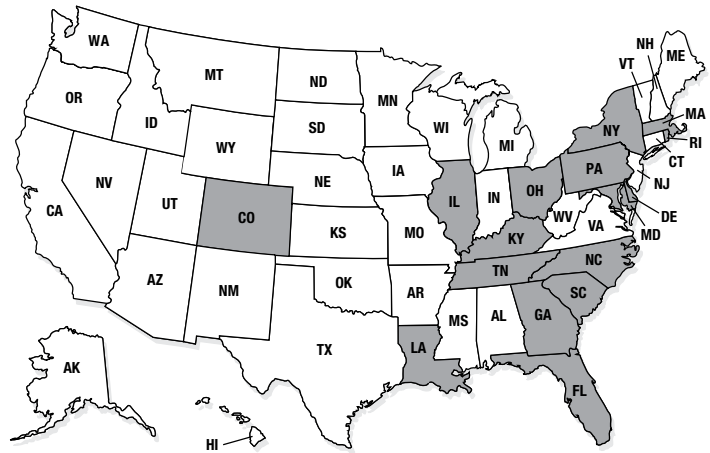
James Gray is another one-time drug warrior who has changed his thinking about marijuana, but for a very different reason. The former federal prosecutor, county judge and Republican

**“It’s a bad idea to approve medication by popular vote.”**

candidate for Congress from CALIFORNIA has come to believe that the ban on marijuana actually makes the drug more accessible to young people. “I ask kids all the time, and they’ll tell you it is easier to get marijuana than a six-pack of beer because that is controlled by the government,” he said, adding that drug dealers don’t check IDs. “Let’s face reality,” he said. “Taxing and regulating marijuana will make it less available to children than it is today.”

The economic argument could end up being the one that tips the scale toward legalization. CALIFORNIA lawmakers are considering a bill that would make the Golden State the first to legalize marijuana for recreational use. The bill isn’t

**Bird’s eye view**



Source: Society of Human Resources Management, National Conference of State Legislatures

■ Race to the Top phase 1 finalists

**Initial Race to the Top finalists announced**

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have been selected as finalists for phase 1 of the Race to the Top grant competition, the Department of Education’s \$4.35 billion effort to reshape America’s educational system. The 16 finalists were chosen from the pool of 40 applicants on the basis of their track record on education reform and their plans for, among other things, building a workforce of effective teachers, creating data systems that support student achievement, and turning around their lowest-performing schools. The winners will be announced early next month, with their number determined by the strength of the applications. The application deadline for phase 2, which will be open to any state that doesn’t receive an award in the initial round, is June 1.





expected to pass this year, but Gray and other advocates are backing an effort to place a proposition on the November ballot legalizing the use of marijuana by anyone 21 or older. They've already submitted 690,161 signatures for verification, far more than the 433,971 valid ones required to qualify the measure. And if the proposal does make it to the voters in the fall, its chances of passage are reasonably good. Fifty-six percent of the respondents to a statewide Field Poll last year said they supported making marijuana legal for recreational use and taxing it.

With the state tax board estimating that legalizing and taxing such use could generate \$1.3 billion or more per year in new revenue, while saving the deficit-ridden state tens of millions of dollars in prison and law-enforcement costs, supporters of the proposition are playing up the economic angle, characterizing the measure's intent as "tax and regulate" rather than "legalize."

Richard Lee, president of Oakland, CALIFORNIA's Oaksterdam University, which trains people to work in the medical marijuana field, sees a parallel with an earlier troubled economic time.

"It's history repeating itself, with [the] alcohol prohibition repeal during the Great Depression," he said. "Now we have the Great Recession. That will be on people's minds."

Despite the alignment of public opinion, federal government policy, economics — and history — in the direction of legalization, there are still plenty of holdouts.

**“Now we have it for medical purposes. Now let's expand it to anyone who wants to get high? I don't support that...Do we then legalize cocaine, legalize heroin?”**

lead to more of the health and societal problems that have resulted from legalized drinking, including DUI-related auto accidents.

"We're going to multiply the problems we have with alcohol abuse," Carroll said. Los Angeles city councilman Dennis Zine's concern is the slippery slope.

## In the hopper

At any given time, State Net tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states, the US Congress and the District of Columbia. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

**Number of Prefiles last week:** 290

**Number of Intros last week:** 2,712

**Number of Enacted/Adopted last week:** 1,160

**Number of 2010 Session Prefiles to date:** 15,517

**Number of 2010 Intros to date:** 62,730

**Number of 2010 Session Enacted/Adopted overall to date:** 7,017

**Number of 2009-10 bills currently in State Net Database:** 170,482

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(measures current as of 3/10/2010)  
Source: State Net database



“Now we have it for medical purposes. Now let’s expand it to anyone who wants to get high? I don’t support that...Do we then legalize cocaine, legalize heroin?”

CALIFORNIA’s experience with medical marijuana hasn’t been entirely trouble-free. The state passed the nation’s first medical marijuana law by ballot measure in 1996. The provisions of that law are so broad that tens of thousands of people have been able to obtain doctors’ recommendations to use marijuana for ailments ranging from cancer to arthritis. And while the law allows the use of marijuana for medical purposes, it does not specifically permit the sale of the drug. So prosecutors in Los Angeles and San Diego have raided hundreds of medical marijuana dispensaries operating out of storefronts.

But CALIFORNIA Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, the San Francisco Democrat who introduced the tax and regulate bill under consideration in his chamber (AB 2254), predicts his state will eventually legalize marijuana for recreational use and other states will follow.

“It’s inevitable that there will be some kind of legalization of recreational marijuana,” he said. “How and where it’s going to happen I think is an open question, but I think a lot sooner than later.” (USA TODAY, STATE NET)

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

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## Budget & taxes

**UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS NOW NOT SO TEMPORARY:** For most newly-unemployed workers, signing on for unemployment benefits is a short-term proposition. But with the economy still struggling, millions of Americans have been forced to rely on unemployment insurance to help them make ends meet for far longer than any period in recent history.

As of last week, around half of the 11 million workers drawing unemployment have in fact exceeded the usual 6-month limit on those benefits. That has been made possible by a string of federal government extensions that allow workers to collect payments for as long as 99 weeks in states with the highest unemployment rates, easily the longest period since the program’s inception during the Great Depression.

It is an expensive proposition. Benefits to the jobless are now running approximately \$10 billion each month. It is not likely to get significantly better any time soon, as many jobs in the real estate, construction and manufacturing sectors are not expected to return even when the economy does eventually regain some growth.

That has some federal lawmakers questioning whether extending benefits is a good idea. Sen. Jon Kyl (R-ARIZONA) said last week that he believes







Chaos rules in the NEW YORK Senate. Technically, Democrats are in charge. But the expulsion of Hiram Monserrate (D) last month, following his conviction for domestic abuse of his girlfriend, has left the Democrats with 31 votes, one shy of the majority needed to pass legislation.

“The State Senate can’t get 32 votes to agree that today is Thursday,” said Assemblyman Daniel J. O’Donnell (D) two weeks ago.

The situation isn’t any better in the governor’s office, where Gov. David Paterson’s (D) tenure is on life support, thanks to two criminal investigations.

“I have a new favorite song,” one senior administration official said. “It’s called ‘It’s the Worst Day Since Yesterday.’”

Administration officials have been spending time lately with prosecutors from the attorney general’s office, which is looking into the governor’s alleged involvement in a domestic violence case involving one of his top aides.

“You have to assume,” said a lobbyist, “that any conversation you are having with an official in the Paterson administration is a three-way conversation that includes law enforcement.”

Richard Schrader, state legislative director for the Natural Resources Defense Council said trying to get anything done right now in Albany is a bureaucratic nightmare.

“Instead of the usual 10 people, you now deal with 30, and you understand that no one person can make a decision,” he said. “It takes the function out of dysfunction.”

By default, the Assembly is the highly functioning member of the Capitol family.

**“The State Senate can’t get 32 votes to agree that today is Thursday.”**

But that doesn’t seem too reassuring to Assembly members with the state facing an April 1 deadline to address a \$9 billion budget gap and the other two participants in the budget process in turmoil.

“Man, I like crazy; I would love crazy,” said Assemblyman Keith L. T. Wright (D). “Our forefathers in their infinite wisdom planned for crazy. But this week we moved to insane.”

Sen. Liz Krueger (D), however, found a bright spot in Lt. Gov. Richard Ravitch (D), who could end up stepping in for the teetering Paterson and becoming the third person to fill out the term begun by Eliot Spitzer three years ago.

“Look, we could have a lieutenant governor who can’t add, but Ravitch can!” she quipped. “He knows that we can’t print money in the basement and he knows how to deal with crises. That’s not so bad.” (NEW YORK TIMES)

**CA SENATOR ‘COMES OUT’:** CALIFORNIA Sen. Roy Ashburn (R) has voted consistently against gay rights measures during his eight years in office. That wasn’t a problem in the conservative district he represents in the southeastern part of the state until two weeks ago when he was arrested for driving under the influence, allegedly after leaving a gay bar. Days later he admitted in a radio interview that he was gay





“I think you’ll get half of the states by the end of the year [to adopt the proposal], based on what they’ve said to us,” said Brenda Welburn, executive director of the VIRGINIA-based National Association of State Boards of Education. But Welburn also noted there are stark regional differences in enthusiasm for the plan, with most Southern states showing strong support. KENTUCKY, for instance, adopted the new standards last month, well before the final version was released to the public. Some Western states, however, appear inclined to be more cautious.

If most states do eventually follow suit, those standards will replace a patchwork of locally written standards, which often vary greatly in content and substance. They will also likely set off a vast new effort to rewrite textbooks and standardized tests.

Michael Cohen, a former Clinton education official who is now president of the standards advocacy organization Achieve, called the proposal “hugely significant.”

“The states recognize they ought to have very consistent expectations for what their students should learn,” Cohen said.

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers began working on the common standards initiative last year, convening panels

**“The states recognize they ought to have very consistent expectations for what their students should learn.”**

of English and math experts from education organizations like Achieve, A.C.T and the College Board. Those experts, with support of groups like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, were asked to develop standards that were both rigorous and coherent. The measure, however, would establish only concepts students

will be expected to learn, not the curriculum for how they will be taught.

The English standards, for example, do not include a preferred reading list, but do note books “illustrating the quality, complexity and range” of student reading that would be appropriate for various grades.

GEORGIA Gov. Sonny Perdue (R) was among the governors who predicted their states would adopt the standards fairly quickly.

“We believe this is in the best interest of education not only in GEORGIA but nationally to have some standards that present an authentic, credible scoreboard by which we can know how we’re doing,” he said.

MARYLAND Gov. Martin O’Malley (D) also predicted the Old Line State would adopt the measures, noting that unlike in previous attempts at setting national standards, the new effort had fairly strong Republican support.

“There was none of the sort of parochial throw-down, ‘Don’t tell us what our standards should be,’” O’Malley said.

There are even signs that ALASKA may be reconsidering its stance against the plan, as education leaders there say they will likely consider the proposal over the next few months. The proposal is now in a public comment period, with a final version to be released in the spring. (WASHINGTON POST, NEW YORK TIMES)



**OTTER, GREGOIRE SPAR OVER ‘LOVE LETTER’**: IDAHO Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter (R) drew the wrath of Gov. Christine Gregoire (D) last week when he posted an open “love letter” on the state web site seeking to attract WASHINGTON businesses to the Gem State. Otter pointed to a recent voter-approved tax hike in OREGON that he claims spurred hordes of Beaver State business owners to contact him about relocating their companies to IDAHO. The governor further noted that Evergreen State lawmakers are considering similar tax hikes that will “chase their cash cows to the border.” Otter said he would be there “to welcome them with open arms.”

That garnered a quick response from Gregoire. After initially insisting that she was no expert on her neighbor to the east, the governor rattled off several reasons why she thought her state’s business climate was still the superior one. She particularly noted that, unlike IDAHO, her state doesn’t have a personal or corporate income tax. She also cited *Forbes* magazine’s annual ranking of state business climates, saying, “We’re now the second best state in the country and they went from seventh to 11th. They’re going down in the rankings. Regulatory environment we’re ranked 5th, they’re ranked 35th. You get my point?” Gregoire said she would be placing a call to Otter herself, just in case he didn’t. (SEATTLE TIMES, OLYMPIAN)

**GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) ordered state prison officials to stop destroying the files of paroled sex offenders. The order came after a parolee was arrested and charged with the murder of a 17-year-old girl. Schwarzenegger ordered officials to keep all records relating to sex offenders indefinitely (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **NEW YORK** Gov. David Paterson (D) reiterated that he will not resign over allegations that he intervened in a domestic violence case involving one of his top aides. Paterson said he intended to “fulfill the mission in which God placed me” (NEW YORK TIMES). • **NEVADA** Gov. Jim Gibbons (R) said he would veto SB 3a, legislation that would move state workers to a 10-hour, four-day work week and close state offices on Fridays. A Gibbons spokesperson said the bill did not give agency leaders enough flexibility (LAS VEGAS SUN). • Still in **NEVADA**, Gibbons asked a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit claiming he led a cover-up of allegations that he grabbed a woman outside a Las Vegas restaurant in 2006. The plaintiff is expected to respond later this month (LAS VEGAS SUN). • **NEW JERSEY** officials say Gov. Chris Christie (R) plans to create a state commission tasked with privatizing as many as 2,000 current state jobs. Christie is also considering invoking the Disaster Control Act to suspend Civil Service rules to make it easier for him to lay off higher paid workers (NORTHJERSEY.COM). • **VIRGINIA** Gov. Robert McDonnell (R) issued Executive Directive No. 1, which bars all workplace discrimination, including over sexual orientation. McDonnell had been

## In case you missed it

With the economy still struggling and unemployment high, lawmakers in more than a dozen states are looking at bills to restrict employers from using a person’s credit history in pre-employment screening.

In case you missed it, the article can be found on our Web site at [http://www.statenet.com/capitol\\_journal/03-08-2010/html](http://www.statenet.com/capitol_journal/03-08-2010/html)



under increasing fire for issuing a similar Executive Order (EO No. 6) in February that did not include protection for homosexuals (WASHINGTON POST).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

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# Hot issues

**B**USINESS: The **OKLAHOMA** House endorses HB 3015, which would provide grocery stores that agree to sell fresh fruits and vegetables access to low-interest government loans. To be eligible, a store could not derive more than 10 percent of its income from the sale of tobacco and beer. The measure is now in the Senate (TULSA WORLD). • The **MISSISSIPPI** Senate endorses HB 170, a measure that would allow all Magnolia State counties the power to regulate strip clubs in their area. Current law grants that power to only three specific counties. It is now with Gov. Haley Barbour (R) for review (COMMERCIAL APPEAL [MEMPHIS]). • **INDIANA** lawmakers approve HB 1065, a measure that would allow Hoosier State workers to bring firearms to work as long as they keep them locked in their vehicles. It is now with Gov. Mitch Daniels (R) for review (EVANSVILLE COURIER & PRESS). • The **WASHINGTON** Senate gives final approval to SB 6248, a bill that bans the use of the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) in the making of plastic baby bottles and other containers intended for use with children under age 3. The measure, which would also bar BPA in sports water bottles, moves to Gov. Christine Gregoire (D), who is expected to sign it (SEATTLE TIMES). • **IOWA** Gov. Chet Culver (D) signs HF 2280, which requires commercial dog and cat breeders to provide their animals with adequate food, water, housing, sanitation and grooming. The measure also enacts a sliding-scale increase in the annual cost of licenses for animal facilities, with commercial breeders paying the highest fees. The funds will be used to cover the cost of increased state inspections, with violators facing fines up to \$1,000 per day (DES MOINES REGISTER).

**CRIME & PUNISHMENT:** The **ARIZONA** Senate endorses SB 1087, which would add homicide, manslaughter, animal cruelty and sexual assault to the list of crimes that when committed against a family member or intimate partner count as domestic violence. The Senate also endorses SB 1086, which would make choking someone a felony punishable by up to two and half years in jail. Both measures move to the House (ARIZONA REPUBLIC [PHOENIX]). • **NEW MEXICO** Gov. Bill Richardson (D) signs SB 2, which adds non-married partners and elders to the list of those covered under the state's domestic violence laws (SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN). • The **OKLAHOMA** House approves HB 2331, a bill that would allow



as fees. The bill is with Gov. Gary Herbert (R) for review (DESERET NEWS [SALT LAKE CITY], STATE NET). • Still in **UTAH**, the House and Senate endorse HJR 34, which allows Beehive State doctors to apologize for medical errors without that statement being considered an admission of guilt (STATE NET). • **NEW MEXICO** Gov. Bill Richardson (D) signs HB 201, which requires state health officials to test newborn babies for five additional diseases. Parents will be allowed to waive the screening if they so choose (SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN). • Also in **NEW MEXICO**, Richardson signs SB 148, which requires insurance companies to phase out by 2014 the use of gender as a factor in setting rates for medical coverage in policies directly sold to individuals and small groups of up to 50 workers (SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN). • **WISCONSIN** Gov. Jim Doyle (D) signs AB 614, legislation that would require health care providers to supply patients with the median-billed charge on the services they provide. Badger State hospitals would be required to list charges for treating the 75 conditions they handle most frequently. Insurers also would have to provide an estimate of out-of-pocket costs (WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL [MADISON]). • **VIRGINIA** lawmakers sign off on HB 10, which would exempt Old Dominion residents from any future federal mandate to purchase health insurance. The mostly symbolic measure goes to Gov. Robert McDonnell (R), who is expected to sign it (WASHINGTON POST).

**SOCIAL POLICY:** The **IDAHO** House endorses HB 610, a bill that sets up a priority list for placement of children in protective custody, with the homes of fit and willing relatives at the top of the list of where to place children in foster care. It is now in the Senate (IDAHO STATESMAN [BOISE]). • **UTAH** Gov. Gary Herbert (R) signs HB 462, which allows a woman who arranges an illegal abortion to be charged with criminal homicide. Herbert vetoed the original measure, HB 12, because it would have allowed criminal charges if the mother's behavior was "reckless," which critics said could include activities like jogging (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE).

**POTPOURRI:** The **OKLAHOMA** House endorses HB 2994, which would make firearms, accessories and ammunition manufactured and sold in the Sooner State exempt from federal regulation. The bill shoots off to the Senate (OKLAHOMAN [OKLAHOMA CITY]).

— Compiled by *RICH EHISEN*

## The week in session

**States in Regular Session:** AK, AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, PR, RI, SC, TN, US, UT, VA, VT, WA, WV

**States in Recess:** SD, WI

**States in Special Session:** CA "f"

**States Currently Prefiling or Drafting for 2010:** LA, MT, ND

**States Projected to Adjourn:** IN, UT, VA, WA, WV

**States in Special Session Projected to Adjourn:** CA "f", CA "h", WI "b"

**States Adjourned in 2010:** AR, NM, WY

**State Special Sessions Adjourned in 2010:** AZ "a", CA "e", CA "h", NM "a", NV "b", OR "a", TN "a", WI "b"

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(session information current as of 3/11/2010)  
Source: State Net database

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# Once around the statehouse lightly

**COWBOY UP, OFFICIALLY:** Every state has its own official symbols, from songs to catchy mottos. Some are more far flung, such as WASHINGTON and ARIZONA, which have their own state amphibians, or ALABAMA, which has an official state quilt. But as the *Casper Tribune* reports, WYOMING recently became the first state to adopt its own standard for righteous living. “The Code of the West” is comprised of 10 principles laid out in a book called “Cowboy Ethics: What Wall Street can learn from the Code of the West.” The code includes such timeless cowboy ethos as “always finish what you start” and “take pride in your work.” Ironically, the book’s author, Jim Owens, isn’t from the Equality State, nor is he a cowboy. Owens says he garnered the code from the Gene Autry and Roy Rogers movies he loved as a kid. Good thing his tastes didn’t lean more to the Three Stooges.

**SOME SERIOUS HAT HEAD AHEAD:** It’s time for ARIZONA Gov. Jan Brewer to git up on the wheel and git ‘er done. As the *Arizona Republic* reports, Brewer has made plans to drive the pace car on April 10<sup>th</sup> when the NASCAR circuit makes its first appearance of the year at Phoenix International Raceway. That has some wags concerned for Brewer’s safety, noting that in the year since she became governor she has spent so much time being shuttled around by a driver that her husband has threatened to sell her car. But some observers think Brewer’s biggest problem won’t be the car, but the helmet she is required to wear while roaring around the track, which is sure to leave her trademark towering tresses in a shambles. Here’s betting the gov’s own “pit crew” works that one out before too many shutterbugs can get to her afterward.

**CUBBIES UBER ALLES:** When it comes to on-field matters, the Chicago Cubs have long been their opponents’ best friend. No team in the history of sport has found more ways to lose than the Cubbies, who are now entering year number 102 without a World Series title. But that hasn’t kept them from being one of the more popular teams — read profitable — in the sport, even in ARIZONA, where the team holds its spring training. But the team isn’t such a favorite with some of the other denizens of the Cactus League this year. That’s because Rep. John McCornish has sponsored HB 2736, a bill that would impose a league-wide ticket surcharge to help pay for a new training complex specifically for the Cubs. Several teams boycotted the league’s recent kickoff breakfast in protest over the tax, saying it was unfair to the fans. Right — as if \$8 beers and \$6 hot dogs are a fair deal.

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**FLUSHED AWAY:** The CALIFORNIA Environmental Protection Agency drew major kudos a few years back when it decided to install low-flow urinals. The new porcelain potties were supposed to be a water savings wonder. How perfect, observers said, that the state's environmental watchdog was going so green. But now the *Sacramento Bee* reports that the agency has removed all 56 of the new-age urinals, citing hundreds of complaints of restrooms being inundated with bad odors and sticky floors. Apparently the rest of the building's plumbing didn't jibe with the modern system. No word if we'll see the now-defunct units on eBay anytime soon.

— By *RICH EHISEN*

**Editor:** Rich Ehsen — capj@statenet.com

**Associate Editor:** Korey Clark — capj@statenet.com

**Contributing Editors:** Virginia Nelson, Art Zimmerman

**Editorial Advisor:** Lou Cannon

**Correspondents:** Richard Cox (CA), Steve Karas (CA), Bruce McKeeman (CA), James Ross (CA), Linda Mendenhall (IL), Lauren King (MA) and Ben Livingood (PA)

**Graphic Design:** Vanessa Perez

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