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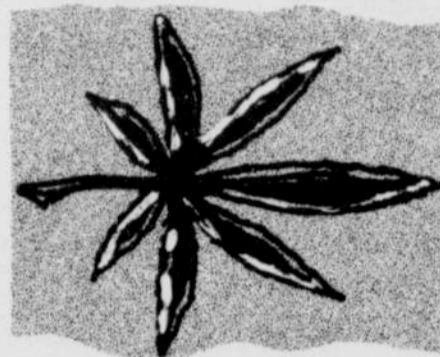
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NATIONAL news
BRIEFS

CALIFORNIA
Sheriff's deputies raided San Francisco's largest medical marijuana club in a pre-dawn raid May 25.

According to The Associated Press, four days after San Francisco Superior Court Judge William Cahill declared the club a public nuisance, a locksmith let a busload of deputies in through a back door of the Cannabis Healing Center at 6 a.m. They evicted seven people staying there, changed the locks and spent most of the day taking an inventory of the building's contents.



Only a small amount of the drug—about three handfuls of dried marijuana and three dozen 4-inch plants—was found. No one was arrested.

The raid was the latest skirmish over Proposition 215, the voter-approved measure legalizing marijuana for medical use in the state of California.

In mid-May, U.S. District Court Judge Charles Breyer banned distribution of the drug, saying the initiative cannot override a federal ban. In doing so, Breyer rejected arguments that the clubs should be entitled to furnish the drug because customers find it hard to survive without marijuana to ease the pain and side effects of cancer and AIDS therapy.

Several other medical marijuana clubs have refused to abide by his order. Clubs in Oakland, Ukiah and the Marin County town of Fairfax continue to operate.

IOWA
Despite acknowledgment by the Des Moines City Council of discrimination against the sexual minority community, the council voted 4-3 on May 18 not to include sexual orientation as a characteristic protected under the city's human rights ordinance, reports the *Des Moines Register*.

"It means we just start over again," reasons John Schmacker, president of the Des Moines Gay and Lesbian Resource Center. "City council members come and go, but the gay community will be here forever."

MASSACHUSETTS
Organizers of the fourth annual Gay and Straight Youth Pride Day in Boston had expected to attract a crowd of about 2,000 to the May 16 gathering. According to police estimates, it drew closer to 7,500.

The *Boston Globe* says a section of Beacon Street was closed to traffic as the larger-than-anticipated crowd spilled into the street from the steps of the state House.

"This shows me we are not alone," said first-time attendee Daniel Penland, a 14-year-old freshman at Bedford High School. "We can reach out and connect here. It is a neat feeling."

NEW YORK
Legislation proposed by New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani would require the city to recognize registered unmarried couples—hetero- or homosexual—as having the same rights as married couples.

The proposal would fulfill a campaign promise Giuliani made to the city's gay and les-

bian population and would give the city one of the nation's broadest sets of domestic partnership policies, according to the *New York Times*.

The bill's timing coincides with Republican Giuliani's attempt to gain national support for a possible run for higher office. But his timing leaves some party members baffled.

"For lack of a better term, it's a very Northeastern Republican bill," grumbled Colorado Republican Party Executive Director Chris Baker. "Imagine him trying to campaign on that kind of legislation down in Alabama. It won't work."

A Bell Atlantic employee is suing his employer for not extending health benefits to his live-in girlfriend—benefits he insists would be hers if theirs was a same-sex relationship.

According to The Associated Press, Long Island resident Paul Foray, who has worked for Bell Atlantic for 28 years, is seeking \$485,000 in damages. Prior to filing this suit in U.S. District Court, Foray unsuccessfully sought \$12 million in state court using the same argument.



Currently, Bell Atlantic extends benefits to same-sex partners of employees who cohabit; opposite-sex partners must be married to employees to receive benefits.

OHIO
Ohio residents with HIV who don't inform sexual partners of their status may soon be subject to felonious assault charges—regardless of whether the virus is transmitted—if a bill that passed the state House May 12 makes it through the Senate.

While nondisclosure of one's HIV status is already illegal in Ohio, it is a crime that carries no penalty, the *Dayton Daily News* reports.

Republican Rep. Ron Young's proposal would make nondisclosure a felonious assault and institute second-degree felony charges for sexual contact between an HIV-positive adult and a minor, regardless of disclosure. Penalties would apply to any type of sexual contact, with or without a condom.

The bill passed the House 92-1. The lone "no" vote was cast by Rep. Dennis Stapleton, R-Washington Court House, who expressed concerns about enforcement and the possibility the law might discourage people from getting tested for HIV.

PENNSYLVANIA
On the heels of a successful May 7 Philadelphia City Council vote for domestic partnership benefits for lesbian and gay city employees, activists are consolidating support for the Pennsylvania Civil Rights Initiative.

The initiative promotes twin civil rights bills to amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act to include sexual orientation as a category in which people would be protected from discrimination.

Organizers hope to have the initiative introduced into the state Senate in June.