

THE CLARION

"CALLING FOR AN END TO CANNABIS PROHIBITION"

Medical Cannabis Advocacy on Trial in Oregon Salem Man

Arrested In 2002 After Plants Found

The trial of Robert Gray, a leader in Salem's medical marijuana movement, began Monday morning, June 9th, 2003 at the Marion County courthouse in Salem, Oregon. It ended the same day.

Gray, 38, founder and director of the Medical Cannabis Resource Center, or MERCY, was charged with manufacture, possession and distribution of a controlled substance.

He is a local area businessman and patient in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program. Born in Salem, the Sprague H.S. graduate owns and operates Rough House Furnishings at 1695 Fairgrounds Road in Salem. <Visit <http://www.pdxnorml.org/biz/RHouse>>.

He, along with other patients, caregivers and



Robert Gray (right) and volunteer Sonny Watkins (center) educate a citizen at MERCY on Fairgrounds Rd. in Salem. The purpose of the Center is to serve the people and being available for walk-ins is an important part of their outreach.

concerned citizens formed MERCY in the spring of 2002. The purpose is to get medicine to patients in the short-term while working with them to establish their own independent sources.

Constantly displaying news and information in his store-front windows, Mr. Gray has committed virtually all of his personal resources to the effort and, thereby, drawn the ire of the authorities. His business operations, as well as the MERCY Centers, have been visited by an army of officials - from the police, to fire marshals, to building inspectors and more - all with their own unique set of flaming hoops for Mr. Gray and the folks at MERCY to jump through. Despite the assaults on his ability to do business or activism, Mr. Gray continues to fight for people's rights.

He still donates time, money, goods and services while making his store available continuously for MERCY functions and general use. From the very first, the people at MERCY have had cases where a patient positively educated his doctor with the Centers help. In one case the person had been working with their doctor since before OMMA passed.

"He was so relieved, so grateful, he had tears in his eyes" said a volunteer who was on the scene. "This is what we are all about".

During the past year MERCY, led by Mr. Gray, has assisted a number of people in getting into the <continued next page>

The CLARION, your basic Cannabis Law Reform Information and Outreach Newsletter, is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit venture committed to ending cannabis prohibition. It is intended to inform and educate the reader on the medical truth about cannabis and the benefits of hemp.

For compliments about the CLARION, call or stop on by and thank our volunteer staff. Complaints, etc is the department of Perry Stripling - editor.

Contact Us Today!

Snail Mail:

**The CLARION
1675 Fairgrounds Rd.,
Salem, Oregon, 97303
503-363-4588**

E-mail:

clarion_editor@hotmail.com

our WWW page:

pdxnorml.org/orgs/clarion

Check it out!

the CLARION would not be possible without the fine people at the



www.MercyCenters.org

Many thanks for their support!

<continued from previous page> OMMP as well as helping them find access to excess medicine. They've had the privilege of being involved with comforting several terminal cases at their own expense. They couldn't even get testimonials in some cases due to the fear factor. Through the above actions, MERCY intends to build a volunteer base for constant recruitment & administration of the organization for the future. Through marketing and communications they hope to coordinate with business and organizations to make a lasting, positive change in the community.

MERCY is a non-profit, grass roots organization that advocates reasonable, fair and effective marijuana laws and policies, and strives to educate, register and empower voters to implement such policies. It was formed by patients, caregivers, advocates and concerned citizens specifically to support the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) and beyond. Many feel cannabis prohibition is (1) the real problem because it is (2) just an excuse for government waste and abuse in general - and an expensive one at that.

Sonny Watkins, who led a prayer circle outside the courthouse on Monday before the trial, said he started the Medical Marijuana Cannabis Center with Gray because it was so difficult for patients to grow and get their medicine.

"I got ripped off, I got used and abused," said Watkins, a caregiver and cardholder.

Joe Salazar, who uses medical marijuana for Spina Bifida, a neural tube defect, said he had to designate another caregiver after Johnson (Mr. Grays co-defendant) was busted.

"All it did is put another obstacle on top of the one I already had," Salazar said. "It's not a drug. We look at it as medication."

The Center's goals are to provide information to patients, and all that are looking for information about the O.M.M.P. or medicinal marijuana in general. On a daily basis they assist people in educating their doctor (or finding a new one), clinics, caregivers, were to get medicine and how to keep your garden growing and clean - among other things.

Among all the tasks the founders and volunteers have accomplished, the mere fact of being open since March 2, 2002 and being around to help inform and direct people towards a better quality of life has been the most rewarding.

MERCY is affiliated with Voter Power, the organization behind the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act in 1998 and supports a proposed expansion of the current law, Initiative 31 - also referred to as OMMA/2.

The Case

The Marion Area Gang and Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET) allege that on March 8, 2002 to have found 37 marijuana plants at 1695 Fairgrounds Road NE, Salem, and a pound (16 ounces) of dried marijuana at a second location. They're search was justified, they say, after making 2 controlled buys through Mr. Gray. The second location was a personal residence where a friend of Mr. Gray's was staying. Mr. Gray was out of town attending his grandfather's funeral at the time. Officers also claim to have found packaging materials and scales, at the residence.

The medical cannabis aspects of the case are complicated. Gray states he was growing for about a half-dozen patients (allowing him 42 plants), including himself. Oregon law also allows a doctor to prescribe a <continued on next page>

<continued from previous page> larger number of plants (more than 7) for a patient. Patients had designated one location for their plants, but did not register with the state, relying on the provision that one has 30 days within which to give notice of a change to the state. Additionally, it typifies the problem with the OMMA relating to cultivating and harvesting (vs. growing and picking).

OMMA allows a 30-day grace period to complete the application process. The law allows a card holding patient or his designated caregiver as much as seven plants - three mature and four immature and as much as seven ounces of dry marijuana. There can be 1 ounce per mature plant at the grow site. State law allows a caregiver to have multiple patients, so there could be several grows at a site. Patients and DPC's (Designated Patient Caregivers) can possess 1 ounce at any time. According to court documents, Gray said he was the caregiver for five cardholders other than himself. However, he didn't get to refer to the law in his trial.

So, although there was an informant who claimed to have made purchases, and 37 plants were seized, the charge that authorities ended up running with was for a pound of dried medicine - since it was at a location and technically in the possession of person/s not yet registered with the OMMP.

On the day of the trial, the strategy of those in authority was to put all the pressure on Mr. Gray's friend who was at the location at the time. Denied his own strategy, and to save his friend, Mr. Gray struck a deal. The sentence, which could be some 42 months, is to occur at a later date. District Attorney Dale Penn, who in statements prior to the trial said that the case has nothing to do with medical marijuana, had asked for 67 months (5+ years) of prison, and then some.

"He may be a cardholder and a caregiver, but our position is the facts of this case goes outside the facts of any medical marijuana evidence," Penn said.

The judge agreed and no mention of OMMP was allowed. Gray says he is within his rights as a medical marijuana cardholder and caregiver under the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act and should have had his say.

"I wanted to take it to the people. We believed in the people and would have won" said Gray.

Marijuana Jury Trial Bypassed; Judge Convicts Advocate For Medical Cannabis, Sentencing to Happen August 13th

So, fifteen months after Robert Gray was busted for manufacture, possession and distribution of marijuana, the director of the Medical Cannabis Resource Center in Salem finally had his day in court Monday. He just wasn't allowed to bring his rights along. Instead of the all-out fight for

principle's sake that Gray swore he would wage, the medical marijuana card holder and provider waived his right to a jury trial.

Two dozen supporters, most wearing white T-shirts with a marijuana plant over a red cross, showed up to support Gray and co-defendant Linda Johnson. The media was alerted and present, prepared literature was being passed out to interested parties. The drug warriors panicked.

Anyone with a poster or sign was driven off, even outside the building. All logo decorated shirts were banned, even if turned inside out and a coat worn over it. Literature, people in wheel-chairs (due to their stickers?) and even water was banned. People were followed, even outside the building, and menaced by authority under the guise of "security issues". Fearing people were speaking to the media, private conversations were overseen and interrupted, saying it might unfairly affect the trial. Which wasn't being allowed anyway!

After being informed of their lack of strategic options, both defendants agreed to stipulated fact trials by Marion County Judge Joseph Ochoa. Thus, Gray was convicted by Ochoa, who said he would give Gray 40 months of jail time. The sentencing is set for Aug. 13 to give investigators time to review Gray's criminal history and his supporters are planning a rally for that date. Contact Wendell Basye of MERCY for more info at > mercycenter@hotmail.com * 503.363-4588 * or visit: www.MercyCenters.org

"I had no choice," Gray said of his decision not to hold out for a jury trial. "He (Ochoa) wouldn't allow me to use medical marijuana as an affirmative defense. I didn't plea because I didn't commit the crime. I need to take it to the Supreme Court on appeal."

Johnson was convicted and sentenced to 18 months of probation, ordered to undergo an evaluation and possible drug treatment, cease being a care provider and stop associating with Gray during that period. Deputy District Attorney Katie Suver said that Johnson's sentence is appropriate.

"It has always been our position that this is not a case that involved medical marijuana," Suver said.

Johnson was emotionally distraught, even before the sentencing.

"I'm only a caregiver," said a teary Johnson, who tried to defend herself after firing her attorney that morning. He later represented her, after all. "I don't smoke it. I do it just to help someone out."

Paul Ferder, Gray's attorney, said with good behavior and boot camp, Gray may only serve nine months.

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Photo by ANDREA J. WRIGHT / Statesman Journal



Sonny Watkins (left) of Independence and other medical marijuana users and supporters pray outside a courthouse Monday. Watkins and Robert Gray started the Medical Cannabis Resource Center in Salem.

<continued from previous page> Since Gray did not have to admit guilt, though Ochoa found him guilty, Ferder can pursue an appeal.

The drawn out legal affair had medical marijuana advocates worried about the fallout. DA Penn said during the case that law enforcement always has been concerned about those who use the medical marijuana law as a shield for illegal drug activities.

Gray's trial comes at a time when the Bush administration is cracking down on states with laws allowing medical marijuana. States with medical marijuana laws have been the focus of increased scrutiny by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and Attorney General John Ashcroft.

For example, a federal bill that targets states allowing medical marijuana use is pending. It would shift \$11 million from state and local police to the federal government to fight drugs in high trafficking areas such as Marion County.

You see, although states are supposed to regulate the practice of medicine and Oregon is one of nine states that allows medical use of marijuana, federal law still prohibits the manufacture and delivery of marijuana, a Schedule 1 drug under the Controlled Substances Act. Authorities have used that excuse on 2 legitimate OMMP patients so far, that we know of - and would have against Mr. Gray if necessary. Patients in all states except California must grow their own or get it as a donation.

While law enforcement officers say Gray was using the law as a front for illegal drug trafficking, Gray and his supporters say he was the target of overzealous law

enforcement efforts. Leland Berger, attorney and NORML Legal Committee advisor:

"It is especially disappointing to read that the Marion County District Attorney's Office take the position that a medical marijuana patient's cultivation of medical marijuana is not a case about medical marijuana.

There are serious problems with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act, but they are not going to be resolved by law enforcement name calling some patients as those who 'abuse' the law. For this reason, the legislature seems to have let die a law enforcement backed measure to amend the OMMA (re: HB2939). I believe that Robbie Gray was not guilty of any charged offense.

"I also believe, and always believed, that the prosecution of him was motivated by their dislike of him. He once beat a case involving accusations of cultivation at multiple residences and law enforcement officials active in OMMA implementation all view him as a person who abuses the act. As a person who is also disliked by state drug law enforcement (although for different reasons) I especially enjoyed working with him on the defense of his case. I found him to be a generous and caring person in all respects.

"Further his efforts in Salem (and now Independence) are both protected under State law and heroic. He is a legitimate medical marijuana patient and advocate. He attended a gathering put on by the Stormy Ray foundation and asked (on videotape) whether multiple patients could designate a single location for their gardens legally."

"His behavior demonstrates his compassion, altruism and good intentions to help others. The Mercy Center, using space donated by and existing due to Mr. Gray's dedication and commitment, currently assists many patients and holds monthly meetings which 20-50 people regularly attend."

In the long term ...

"Fortunately, petitioners are collecting signatures for OMMA2, which addresses and corrects problems with implementing the existing OMMA and would prevent the sort of unnecessary prosecutions, which waste public resources".

Since the bust, Mr. Gray and the folks at MERCY have re-allocated some of the resources, including grow sites. They now try to maintain the store-front in Salem as well a facility in Independence. He said he will pursue a lawsuit against Marion County.

In Oregon, while some medical marijuana advocates are pushing to expand the existing law, others are worried about protecting hard-won gains. About 5000 Oregonians are

registered medical marijuana patients. House Bill 2939, was supposedly written to avert potential problems with the federal government by tightening the state's medical marijuana law, will likely die in the Senate. Dr. Grant Higginson, state health officer, said the bill would have put restrictions on cardholding patients with criminal pasts. He said a work group is being formed to craft revisions to the law for the next session. Wendell Basye, assistant director of MERCY, said the classification of marijuana with other Schedule I drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine is out of line. He also called Gray's trial the epitome of a "witch hunt" mentality of overzealous law enforcement.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gray intends to sue Marion County after his trial.

What does this case mean? Reaction from other groups and advocates in the movement?

Stormy Ray, the grandmother who helped get Oregon's Medical Marijuana Act on the books, said she's found law enforcement to be supportive of the law. She sees a growing divide among what has become three sides of the issues; patients, advocates pushing for legalization, and the federal government.

"We try to take patients out of the middle with education," said Ray, who heads a foundation to educate and assist patients, law enforcement, and others in the community about Oregon's law. "That situation wouldn't exist if patients had medicine," she said. "Those people don't have any place to go."

Dan Koozer, Cannabis Liberation Front, a Eugene-based marijuana law reform group, comments:

"Was this case commonly known? I don't remember seeing anything about it on our email list (DPFOR - Drug Policy Forum, Oregon). I can't understand why we can't get enough people to overfill courtrooms during these ' trials' ."

"I realize that this case is mainly about medical marijuana, but I'd like to remind everyone that re-legalization is the ONLY answer. The OMMP is an ' advance' in ending Cannabis Prohibition, but is creating a self serving bureaucracy without really helping. People are stilling being hassled and lawyers and such (judges are lawyers too) continue to fill their pockets with our money. No offense to our fellow reformers whom are lawyers - I do acknowledge the tremendous amount of pro bono legal work that is provided."

More on the MERCY Center

MERCY is a not-for-profit group founded by patients and other compassionate and concerned citizens in the area and dedicated to helping and advocating for those involved with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP). Their

goal is independence for their Patient Members in the short term and freedom for the rest of us by ending cannabis prohibition. To this end they provide, among other things, ongoing education to clinics, individual physicians and other healthcare providers about the OMMP, cannabis as medicine and doctor rights in general.

The group operates Patient Resource Centers in the Salem area where multiple services are provided to patients seeking to use their medicine legally. Volunteers at the Medical Cannabis Resource Center help maintain a storefront at 1695 Fairgrounds Road in Salem in order to assist people with the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program. They do not have a full staff (yet!), so call ahead for hours. They also monitor and negotiate with government agencies involved with medical marijuana.

What's in a Name ...

MERCY originally started as a proposed branch of Voter Power. In August of 2002, the group changed their name from **Capital City Voter Power** to the **Medical Cannabis Resource Center (MCRC - "MERCY")**. This did not reflect a shift in their philosophy or mean a break with Voter Power. The change was in order to protect the majority in the case of federal involvement in the issue in Oregon. Should Ayatollah Ashcroft and the Bush League saddle up their high horses and come here to save us from ourselves, they won't be able to take out a bunch with one stroke. Assuming they will follow the usual strategy of first seizing any assets people may use to defend themselves (bank accounts, computers) or continue their message, the hope is to de-centralize and spread them out. Remember, they don't need to "win" the case, they just need to shut them up and frighten the rest.

Voter Power headquarters is at 333 SW Park Ave, Suite 305, Portland, Oregon, 97205. They can be reached at 503.224-3051, via email: office@voterpower.org, or website: www.voterpower.org, or snail mail to them at: P.O. Box 68326, Oak Lodge, Oregon, 97268.

The Mercy Center will continue to team with Voter Power - to educate and activate the public as they provide medicine and support for the people of the OMMP.

The mission of MERCY is to bring about change and establish safeguards for the future. The goal is the empowerment of the people through their votes and general activism. To get the people involved in this and all issues.

What do they hope to accomplish ... how? Why?

Regular meetings continue. The Medical Cannabis Resource Center is reaching out to the community and holds regular, public monthly meetings at 1675 Fairgrounds

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<continued from previous page> Road in Salem. Meetings draw about 40 on the average and usually start at 7pm on the first Thursday of the month. Potential agenda items include financial reports, a report on members and information about the Patient Resource facilities themselves. The challenge now is for the MERCY to turn this into organized action.

Some of the ongoing projects discussed are helping patients find access to excess medicine, educating people about cannabis's therapeutic benefits, helping to fill out OMMP forms, answer questions and generally communicating with walk-in contacts through the office. It is a daily effort to provide information to the public so they can decide, or help loved ones decide, if cannabis is right for them and the steps they should take from there. Many thanks to the volunteers at the MERCY who make this possible.

A few of the immediate objectives are to inform & educate about the therapeutic benefits as well as the true medical facts about cannabis; support the rights of patients & doctors in the OMMP; promote a healthier environment through hemp; empower groups and actions that broadcast information & news about the harm, waste and abuse caused by can prohibition in general.

The basic strategy will be to join and initiate events & actions; to research and broadcast news & info – to be media outlet for the movement! MERCY wants to be in a position to help or even launch initiative and like activities; to make available basic legal help for all cannabis users; to promote hemp for a healthier environment; to be a part of the community.

Patients and doctors in OMMP will be able to network and share information about their conditions and how to obtain & apply their medicine – growing tips, cooking recipes, which strains work best, etc. MERCY hopes to educate doctors and patients in general on their rights as well as the truth on the medical effects – beneficial and otherwise.

Other projects discussed at the meetings are Doctor Referrals and Doctor Clinics, Tyranny Response Teams (TaRTs) and Rallies such as the Million Marijuana Marches. Drop on by and help out. See you next meeting!

Doctor Clinics. In order to best serve those who use cannabis for medical purposes but are not yet in the OMMP, as well as current patients, the MERCY is exploring hosting clinics where certified physicians can perform the necessary examinations and consider qualifying a persons OMMP application. Volunteer staff is training to follow the recent strict Board of Medical Examiners rules concerning the process and resources are being lined up. This coincides with ongoing education to clinics, individual physicians and other healthcare providers about the OMMP, cannabis as medicine and

doctor rights in general. This project ties in with a planned symposium on working within OMMA for doctors and attorneys. Doctor education and support, Patient and Caregiver projects like learning to grow and different methods for consumption. These are especially important for the first time medical cannabis user as well as those unable to smoke their medication. Stay tuned for details!

Tyranny Response Teams (TaRTs). Immediately following a recent raid, local friends and patients of a medical cannabis club in California assembled and effectively responded to the event. They blocked the only road out and forced the DEA to call in local sheriffs' deputies. The local cops, while sympathetic, were unable to do anything about the bust per se, but were able to gain the release of the arrested leaders (charges pending). The action also received media attention, which caught the shamed DEA agents on film as they skulked out in their bloated, SUV-rich caravan. The MERCY wants to be the kind of group that organizes such responses to tyranny. Help make it happen.

Salem Liberation Day and the Million Marijuana Marches. On May 3rd, 2003 people in over 150 cities rose up and marched to raise awareness about cannabis. The MERCY Center was there with a modest Salem entry. This is our chance to show the people just what kind of "terrorists" we really are and we made it a general human rights and freedom day, inviting all related organizations to join. Be there next year and help make it happen!

Expectations. Unfortunately, MERCY has to deal with some issues at the same time. Patient Expectations –v- Reality. Integrity – people not telling the whole story or outright fabrications. For those who are sincerely in need of help, education and support towards independence you will get it. For those just working some angle, you merely waste time – mostly yours.

Some news items and issues the folks at the MERCY Center are trying to follow up on. If you have more info on these - or- items of your own, please contact us.

There have been 2 reports of busts of valid Patients in Oregon by the DEA, same agent. Among the propaganda accompanying these actions are statements that cannabis is not medicine. There was also a report of some local yokel police in Gresham "busting" and taking medicine from a cardholder in compliance, taunting the victim with tales of how "they" were going to shut down the OMMP "scam" and "get" Dr. Leveque too. Combined with reports of doctors in the Roseburg area having been systematically hassled, it appears some education of law enforcement is still necessary. The volunteers at the MERCY will endeavor to generate or direct the proper information to these misguided souls. Many thanks for their efforts.

MERCY remains a strong patient advocate, which has manifested itself in a variety of ways. One of these has been maintaining lines of communication with other patient advocates and the OMMP director and workers. At the same time they continue Doctor education and support, and Patient and Caregiver projects like learning to grow and different methods for consumption. These are especially important for the first time medical cannabis user as well as those unable to apply their medication.

Here in Oregon we have seen the number of State certified patients grow to over 4,000 and even law enforcement is admitting that the criminal problems they expected have not occurred. More and more health care professionals are being educated through personal experience with legal patients. They see patients who forgo harsh prescription drugs, the cost often paid by insurance, to use cannabis, which they find more effective. They see patients with improved health and mental attitudes. Family, friends and acquaintances of patients are also having their own educational experience as they too see the benefits of medicinal cannabis. As more patients become certified this process will only expand.

While this is all good, most of us agree that OMMA is not perfect and that having access to quality medicine is difficult for many patients. One of the goals of the OMMP advocate community will finally be met, that of reducing the fee for an OMMA permit.

Medical Marijuana Program Reduces Fees

The state Department of Human Services (DHS) has filed administrative rules to reduce application fees for Oregon's medical marijuana program on July 1.

"This is a fee-supported program", said Grant Higginson, MD, state public health officer in DHS.

"Because participation has grown, we are now able to lower fees in certain categories and bring program revenues in line with program expenses.

Higginson said that letters were sent out informing current participants about the change. Specifically, the new fee schedule is:

- * \$150 for new applications; this fee remains unchanged;
- * \$100 for renewal applications; fee was formerly \$150 per year;
- * \$50 for applicants who are enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan or who receive federal Supplementary Social Security Income; this is a new fee reduction.

To qualify for the \$50 fee, applicants must submit documentation that verifies they are on the Oregon Health Plan or are receiving Supplemental Social Security income, Higginson said.

"We will verify eligibility before issuing a registry identification card."

The OHD press release on this change can be found at: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/news/2003news/2003-0624.html>
 Contact: Bonnie Widerburg at (503) 731-4180 -or-
 Technical contact: Grant Higginson, M.D., at: (503) 731-4000.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Act was a ballot initiative approved by voters in 1998. The law required DHS to create a registry system for persons authorized to use marijuana for medicinal purposes. Applicants must provide a statement from their physician that they have a qualifying medical condition and that medical marijuana might alleviate their symptoms or disease. Once their application is approved they are issued a registration card that is renewable annually.

Currently more than 5,500 patients are registered with the medical marijuana program, and approximately 1,000 physicians, representing all 36 Oregon counties, have signed applications for people enrolled in the program.

Additional information on the medical marijuana program is on the Web at >

<http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/oaps/mm/welcome.htm>

< or you can get an informational packet, with forms by calling (503) 731-4002 – or – write to OHD, P.O. Box 14450, Portland, OR 97293-0450 and they'll send you one.

NOTE: It has been learned that the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) is starting to track the secondary conditions for which patients use cannabis. For example, while insomnia is not an allowed qualifying condition, many people use cannabis to help them sleep. Because there is a process to add conditions to the Act, the fact that the Program is keeping a record of these secondary conditions may make it easier to add them in the future as qualifying conditions. Consequently, we encourage all patients, when talking to their doctor, to be sure to mention all the ways that cannabis is used medicinally.

This information was researched, produced and distributed without profit for research and educational purposes. For more information see "Medical Marijuana Advocate Confident As Trial Set To Begin", by SUSAN TOM, Statesman Journal - June 7, 2003. "Marijuana jury trial bypassed" by SUSAN TOM, Statesman Journal - June 10, 2003. Susan Tom can be reached at (503) 399-6744 -or- email: stom@StatesmanJournal.com. Many thanks to R. House Furniture for their generous support (next door to the MERCY office at 1695 Fairgrounds Rd., Salem, 97303. Call: 503.363-0596). Stay tuned for the next event, action or other opportunity for contact.

THE CLARION

"CALLING FOR AN END TO CANNABIS PROHIBITION"

What YOU Can Do

Register, Vote and Contact your representatives and encourage a change in the laws. We should lobby all representatives to think of the potential costs of their decisions on election day.

In the short term, come and support compassionate advocates like Robert Gray. **Next occasion is August 13th** where Mr. Gray will be formally sentenced. There is a rally planned for that day along with various awareness raising activities leading up to the event. Contact Sonny Watkins at 503.363-4588 -or- Wendell Basye at MercyCenter@hotmail.com -or- visit the website at www.MercyCenters.org for the latest details.

The long run, there are several bills now at the city, state and federal levels concerning cannabis as medicine and in general. For example, OMMA/2 and OCI.

OMMA/2

The Life With Dignity Committee, along with their friends at Voter Power, began petitioning on May 1, 2003. Since that time they have given petitions to several hundred volunteers and already have thousands of signatures turned in. They are looking for more volunteers who want to help get OMMA2 on the ballot. They had a booth at the Rose Festival in Portland and will for each event and festival they can - they are scheduled to work many county fairs, the State Fair, and lots of others. They need lots of volunteer help to pull all this off. Volunteers needed to be petitioners, people to work at booths educating the public, people to do clerical work at the office, people to make phone calls and lots of other jobs. They are looking for people committed to fixing Oregon's marijuana laws. To get a petition or to schedule some volunteer time call 503-224-3051 and ask for Corinna. If you are outside the Portland area and want to help organize petitioning in your area call 503-224-3051 and ask for Eddie, he'll work with you to develop a plan for your area. They need 100,000 signatures to qualify OMMA2 for the November 2004 ballot.

OMMA2 is going to be a great step forward. Help make it happen! How would OMMA2 change Oregon's medical marijuana law? It would:

- 1) Establish nonprofit dispensaries, which could cultivate, process and dispense marijuana to registered patients. The Health Department would regulate, inspect, and collect fees from dispensaries to fund the program.
- 2) Establish a system to provide medical marijuana to indigent patients through dispensaries
- 3) Require County Health Departments to create a dispensary if none exists.
- 4) Lower the annual registration fee patients must pay.

5) Allow attending physicians to qualify patients for any condition the physician believes would benefit from using medical marijuana.

6) Change the definition of "attending physician" in the law to include naturopathic physicians and nurse practitioners.

7) Require new registry cards to be issued when a patient's address or caregiver changes.

8) Require the Health Department to verify, whether someone is a qualified patient at any time, at the request of a law enforcement officer. (Currently they only do this during business hours.)

9) Increase the number of plants patients could grow to ten.

10) Stop counting seedlings as plants.

11) Increase the amount of marijuana a patient could possess to one pound (six pounds if the patient registers that they only grow one crop annually).

12) Clarify that a caregiver could assist up to ten patients.

13) Allow caregivers to be compensated in any manner agreed to by patients.

14) Allow the Health Department to conduct scientific research into medical marijuana.

15) Establish reciprocity with other states with medical marijuana laws.

16) Guarantee patients right's by cause of action.

17) Establish a commission to oversee program management.

The full text of OMMA2 is posted at www.voterpower.org. Anyone can contribute to A Life with Dignity Committee at: PO Box 3586 Portland Or 97208. Call 503-224-3051 for more information.

OCI

The Oregon Cannabis Initiative was filed June 2002, and they have been collecting signatures for a couple of months now. They met with Rob Kampia (MPP - Marijuana Policy Project) at length, last July (2002) at the Libertarian National Convention Indianapolis. Please check their web page to get the text and official ballot title with summary. OCI is a full decriminalization and allows all adult Oregonians to grow 6 plants, possess 3 dry Oz, transfer for no consideration 1 dry Oz to other adult Oregonians over 21. OCI also defines hemp as cannabis with less than 1% THC, so hemp is declared legal. Contact:

Oregon Cannabis Initiative
<http://oregonci.org/>