

PERSPECTIVES

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Thumbs



THUMBS UP
To Newt Gingrich.
No matter what you think of his politics, his decision to resign as Speaker of the House and leave Congress to end divisions within his party is admirable.

To Mattel Toys.
For the new WNBA Barbie doll. She finally gets to wear an outfit that's not hot pink or trimmed in lace.



THUMBS DOWN
To Construction on Coburg Road.
This endless project vexes us on an almost daily basis, and makes us want to kill on game days. There's nothing we can do about it, but it sure feels good to vent.

To Christmas in November.
It's two weeks before Thanksgiving and the holiday press is already beginning. Does this mean we'll all be broke and cranky sooner?

Despite election results, it may be awhile before medical the marijuana initiative takes effect.

Pot, or not

Well, it's official. Measure 67 has passed and it's time for Oregonians to kick back and free the weed.

This is the attitude that many of the opponents of Measure 67, as well as some of its supporters, have about what medical marijuana laws are all about. If you think that sounds stupid, you're right.

The passage of this law does not allow for indiscriminate dispensation of pot. There will not be doctors standing on rooftops throughout the state tossing down dime bags and hemp seeds to the populace. Neither will "Dude, it's a prescription" keep you from getting busted.

Whether you were for it or against it, if you're looking at Measure 67 as the first step on the path to legalization, you might want to consult a map.

The wording of Measure 67, and of similar initiatives throughout the country, was extremely specific. To be exempt from criminal drug charges, those partaking in marijuana use must be diagnosed with one of five diseases—AIDS, cancer, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis or epilepsy.

Furthermore, Measure 67 dictated that a permit system be instituted before marijuana can be dispensed. It is likely that hammering out the logistics of this inevitably complicated system will substantially slow down the process of putting the law into effect.

And let's not forget the most unpredictable element in this equation—the federal government. This is

especially interesting because the U.S. Government is not exactly known for its unpredictability.

When California passed medical marijuana initiatives in 1996, everyone from the drug czar to the president swooped down wielding the promise of prosecution, essentially rendering those measures moot. Up until a week before this year's election, similar sentiment was issuing from Washington.

Since medicinal marijuana measures passed handily in five of the seven states in which they were proposed, however, the government has softened considerably.

One of the key reasons behind this

sudden turnaround is the increasing reluctance of doctors to prescribe, or even recommend marijuana to their patients.

Whatever doctors decide, the rules of politics dictate that federal challenges to medical marijuana will be inevitable. This begs many questions, not the least of which is why we bother to vote in the first place if our wishes are simply going to be ignored or re-legislated by government.

The message here is this: voting on an issue is not the end of the political process.

So before you start wringing your hands over the passage of Measure 67 or get to carried away by the thrill of victory, you should temper your reaction with the reality of politics. Voting on an issue does not represent an end to the process, it's simply a good start.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

