

Proposed Gay Lib statute faces hearing

The Eugene Human Rights Commission will decide Jan. 23 following a public hearing whether to recommend that the city amend its statutes to prohibit discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation."

Present statutes prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race and national origin. The proposal, sponsored by the Eugene Gay People's Alliance and the Eugene Gay Women, would add the phrase "sexual orientation" to the list.

Members of the Gay people's alliance feel that the primary stumbling block has been a lack of information or the presence of misinformation on the part of Commission members. Some Commission members, notably Chairer Bobby Edwards, feel that the issue goes deeper.

"The pattern has been that the more the members are made aware of the facts, the more they realize that there is a need for change," said Jim Hood, past Chairer of the Eugene Gay People's Alliance. "As we continue to provide information to the

commission showing that there is discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, they realize that there is an inconsistency between their professed concern for the principles of human rights and continued opposition to our position," said Hood.

Contacted by phone Wednesday, Edwards had a different view of the problem. "Information and lack of it was part of the problem, but the groups involved have provided a considerable amount of it to the commission. I think there are some underlying things that are operating in some of the commission members," said Edwards.

One of those underlying issues, said Edwards, is the question of whether the commission could handle complaints dealing with discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

"Suppose for example, that an employer has no place on an application form for an indication of sexual orientation. If someone is denied the job and comes back

to the commission alleging that he was denied the job because of his sexual orientation, we won't have the resources to find out if the complaint is valid or not," said Edwards.

"I personally think the courts and district attorney's office would be much better equipped to handle this sort of problem."

Edwards, who is Black, had another objection. "I was insulted by the various groups use of parallels between the Black experience and the Gay Liberation Movement. I feel that they have been exploiting Blacks to further their own goals," said Edwards.

"I've known homosexuals and know that there are cases of discrimination, but I don't see that many Gay people out starving in the ghettos," commented Edwards.

Edwards said the purpose of the public hearing is to open the ultimate decision to the public. "Up to now, we have only had one side of it—all our information has come from the Gay people themselves."

At one point the Gay People's Alliance felt that the hearing was merely a ploy by the commission to shift responsibility for the decision onto the shoulders of the community. However, Hood said they welcome the opportunity.

"We feel we have a very strong position. We have everything to gain through an objective airing of the facts and consideration of those facts by an unprejudiced body."

Edwards said he felt the Gay People's Alliance had reason to feel optimistic about the chances for approval. "I think it will pass, although the commission is quite evenly divided. If it doesn't pass this time, it will in the near future," said Edwards.

It is possible that the commission might still table the amendment for consideration the meeting following the hearing, because some new members will be attending their first session, but Edwards said he would call for a vote on the issue the night of the hearing.

The hearing will be held at 7:30 in the City Council Chambers.

Peace groups meet Saturday

A meeting of local peace groups will be held Saturday at Harris Hall from 1-5 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss strategy for the coming months.

According to Rick Fitch of the Eugene Peace Center, all local peace groups have been invited and the focal point of the meeting will be laying of plans for inaugurations day activities, Jan. 20.

"This meeting will also provide an opportunity for new people to get involved in various peace organizations," Fitch said.

Drug survey . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

The survey was conducted in five high schools—Sheldon, Churchill, North Eugene, South Eugene and Thurston—and student respondents were protected by the practice of having the questionnaire results transposed to computer cards immediately and the original questionnaires destroyed. Students were also assured that results of the questionnaire would be available through local newspapers and their schools.

Carmichael says that every effort was made in the survey to weed out "exaggerators or liars." One method employed by the researchers to check such untruthful responses was placing control questions in the survey.

If a student said that he had used LSD "under a doctor's care only," then that entire questionnaire would be thrown out as unreliable.

Forty-eight of the students say they use marijuana while alcohol is used by 64 per cent. Two per cent list barbiturates and another five per cent name amphetamines. Heroin usage was reported by one per cent of the students.

Carmichael says that drug usage in this area is above national levels, and that the usual reason given for this is the presence of a large University and the unique fact that the Eugene area is a stopping off place for West Coast travellers.

"That's the reason often cited," Carmichael said, "but the truth may be the opposite—traffic coming from the high schools to the University."

Carmichael warns against the temptation to speculate with the findings of the report. He said that many people he has talked to have warned him of a so-called "boomerang" effect of using ex-addicts as drug educators for the young. "The rationale is," he says, "he's an ex-addict, he pulled through it, so it must be okay."

Carmichael emphasized that "causation is difficult" in trying to determine the why of drug use.

Supporting him is the conclusion of the report: "We neither have the time nor the resources to allow guesses to substitute for knowledge and panic programs to substitute for well-thought-out drug abuse prevention measures."

The Pittsburg-born Carmichael doesn't intend to drop the matter of testing drug education; this term he plans to do another study—similar to the high school survey—which will cover drug users at Lane Community College and the University.

He himself is the father of three children and his interest in methods, practices and effectiveness of drug education go beyond merely an academic interest. He feels that the primary responsibility for drug education still resides with the parent—they are the ones who set the standard, ultimately, for their children to follow.

Carmichael classifies smoking and drinking—tobacco and alcohol—as dangerous drugs, drugs that can affect the health of the user detrimentally.

He feels that many parents who smoke and drink for the same reason their kids take drugs represent a bad example which is hard to overcome, even with school-initiated drug education.

"Verbally," Carmichael says of such parents, "they say one thing; non-verbally they say another."

Pollution authority advised to expand

Michael Heys, of a San Francisco consulting firm, presented a study of the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA) that dominated discussion at the monthly meeting of the LRAPA board of directors Wednesday night.

Heys said that "increased regulation" and "increased interest from the public" will cause strains on the LRAPA in the future. He urged that the LRAPA expand to alleviate the expected problem.

Heys stated that in view of the technical nature of the dealings of the LRAPA, the director should be a technician instead of an administrator. He also recommended that in view of regulations that sometimes hamper the use of budget allocations, a more objective budget should be adopted.

The board postponed the approval of an environmental impact statement on five parking lots of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency.

In other action the board approved Emory Crofoot of the Columbia-Willamette Air Pollution Authority to act as a lobbyist for the LRAPA at the state legislature.

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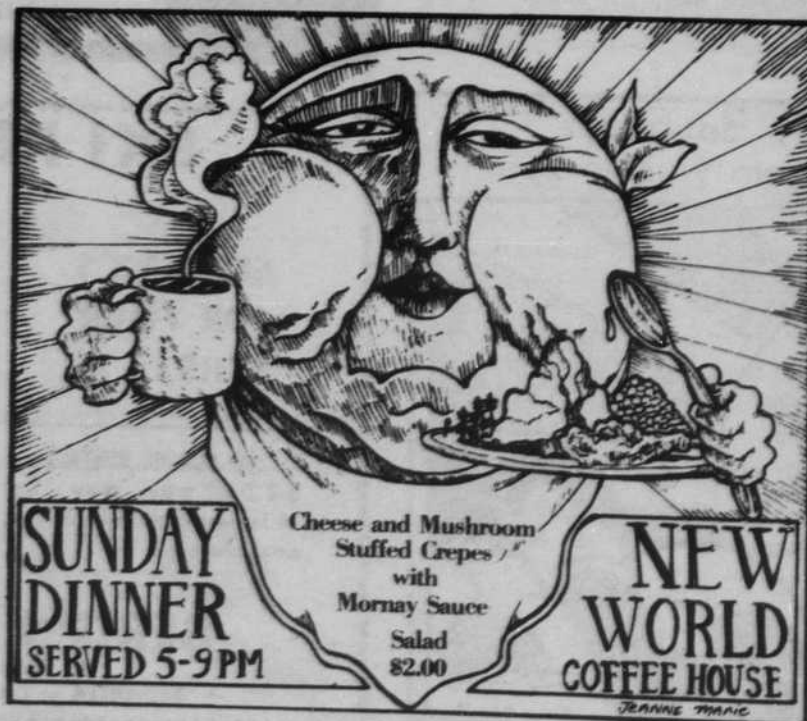
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