

Lettuce boycott can work

Students shopping at the 18th and Pearl Safeway market Saturday afternoon were no doubt surprised by the presence of United Farm Worker Pickets outside the store.

Safeway had been the target of UFW pickets in the past when the union was sponsoring a nationwide boycott of California seedless grapes. But the grape boycott ended nearly two years ago and the more recent boycott of lettuce has not gained significant public attention.

It was to protest Safeway's continued sale of non-union lettuce that the Saturday picket line was established, and local union spokesmen say picketing will continue on a regular basis until the boycott is concluded.

The issues surrounding the lettuce boycott are not complex. The UFW, under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, has been struggling for years to gain legitimate union representation for migrant farm workers.

The UFW is not a fat-cat union. Its leaders are not paid outrageous salaries or housed in luxurious city offices. The UFW is one of the few unions which can claim grass-roots support from its constituents. And the UFW is the only union which has been able to unite the diverse ethnic and social elements which constitute the migrant labor population.

But the union has had to struggle to gain recognition from growers. Unionization has forced growers to raise low wages to a respectable level and spend money to improve incredibly poor living facilities for workers.

California iceberg lettuce growers refuse to recognize the UFW for those reasons. And they attempt to skirt the non-union brand by picking lettuce under contracts with the Teamsters union.

But the teamsters can hardly claim to represent farm workers. Their leadership

is not only lily-white but as fat-cattish as the growers.

The only acceptable California lettuce is delivered in crates carrying the UFW trademark, a black eagle, and the initials "UFW". Lettuce picked by other unions may be labeled union lettuce, but is not acceptable.

If you are in doubt about the brand of lettuce being stocked in a store, ask to see the crates it came in.

Local lettuce, and non-California lettuce may be purchased without violating the boycott.

The effectiveness of the UFW strategy was proven during the grape boycott. In 1969 California seedless grape sales were down 12 per cent and prices were down 15 per cent.

The boycott forced growers to negotiate with the union. With support the lettuce boycott may do the same.

Commentary

Handling a touchy issue — legally

By Lee Siegel

On Dec. 18, 1972 the Eugene City Council took action on what was quite literally a touchy issue. The Council passed an ordinance which adds a new section to the Eugene Code. The new section, titled Indecent Touching, reads as follows:

"No person in, or in view of a public place or private premises extended to the public for use, shall willfully participate in repetitive or continuous touching, fondling, manipulating, or rubbing of the genitals, breasts or buttocks, whether exposed or unexposed, of a human body, for the purpose of arousing or gratifying any person's sexual desires, and knowing that such act is likely to be observed by another person."

Stories popped up

Keith Martin, the Assistant City Manager, says that the ordinance came as a result of accounts of "public displays of inordinate affection on the mall." Most of the displays occurred during the summer months, and while the problem was not overwhelming, the same stories of lurid behavior kept popping up.

Martin said that it was "somewhat of a

war stories phenomenon." In some cases, police would ask the couple engaging in such activities to go somewhere else. This quite often brought on less than the desired response, but since there was no law against doing "it", the police could do nothing. The obvious answer was to make "it" illegal.

Despite the fact that the problem was not very great and that offenses did not occur very often, the Council felt that an emergency clause should be added to immediately put an end to such offensive activities.

The clause reads "The provisions contained in this ordinance are necessary for protecting the health, safety and welfare of the city, and therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage by the Common Council and approval by the Mayor."

Just how indecent touching can damage the health, safety or welfare of the citizenry is beyond understanding. Perhaps it is contagious, and the city fathers feared an immediate outbreak of public fondling.

Epidemic could spread

Such an epidemic might spread through the entire state, even the nation, and lead to a disintegration of the American way of life. It is hard to truly comprehend the horrors of such a situation!

The ordinance itself raises many questions.

It states that a person must be "willfully" engaging in the prohibited behavior. I asked Mr. Martin what would happen if the fondling, touching, or manipulating was carried out in a fit of blind animal passion.

His reply, simple and to the point, was "Balderdash!"

Other questions are also worthy of consideration. What if the action was neither repetitive nor continuous, but only sporadic? Would sporadic touchers be subject to arrest?

What about other parts of the body? Why does the ordinance discriminate against genitals, breasts and buttocks? Are there other parts of the body that are worth manipulating? How about ears? Or toes? Or noses?

An important question is raised when one considers the intent of the offenders. What if two people were stroking each other for a political purpose, such as protesting the Vietnam War, rather than for the "purpose of arousing or gratifying" sexual desires?

Can't you see it? "Petting for peace" would force Nixon to bow to every demand of the antiwar movement and create an atmosphere of affection and love everywhere.

SPLAT against law

Perhaps more pertinent would be the case of political activists who protest the ordinance itself. I spoke with the president of a newly formed organization, the Society for the Preservation of Loving and Touching (SPLAT) which seeks to overturn the new law.

"At our last meeting," he says, "many of our members were extremely excited and were talking in favor of swift action. The consensus was that we would ask those who support us to come on down to the mall and have a giant Touch In. If every one just sat there repetitively and/or continuously petting, rubbing, fondling, or even massaging each other, the city would have to call out the National Guard to pull us apart."

Some of the more radical SPLAT members have been calling for the

passage of an amendment to the Constitution which would state "There shall be no law made respecting the establishment and completion of congress, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom to reach; or to press; or the right of two people to peaceably assemble, and to pet their embodiments for an undressing of their constitutions."

Whether SPLAT members will take definite action is not clear. However, one thing is certain, indecent touching is now illegal in the city of Eugene, and there are no ifs, ands, or buttocks about it!

Letters

Petition

In the Emerald of 1-8-73 reporting on a peace message sent to Senators Hatfield and Packwood the name of my agency appeared under my signature. When I signed the petition at church I gave my home address only.

In an age when many are questioning "credibility" of government let us help to keep the records straight—I signed for myself and I can speak for no other.

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Over-generalizations

I would like to respond to Mr. Wyatt's letter of Jan. 16. In his letter I was referred to as part of Mike Bonner's coalition backing his bid for senate presidency and as a "roommateless friend".

Firstly, I refuse to be considered a part of any coalition. No one has my vote in his pocket. Also, as a new senator, I felt that I was entitled to have a choice as to whom would become senate president. I was not afforded this choice.

My nay vote on Mr. Zukin's confirmation reflected this attitude. Moreover, I am neither roommateless nor a friend of Mr. Bonner. I have spoken more words with Mr. Zukin than with him.

Therefore, I hope that Mr. Wyatt does a little more research before he over-generalizes again.

Gary A. Ball
ASUO Senator
Mathematics

