

GPA programs deserve funding

By JERRY HARRIS

This commentary is a response to the letter by Linden and Dwight Jeffers, Homer Wells, and Gerald Arndt (May 23), concerning the Gay People's Alliance budget of \$1,280 approved by the Incidental Fee Committee.

The writers say that they "have not seen one program or service that the GPA can offer that will benefit anyone except their social group." If they haven't seen, they sure haven't been looking very hard. Our programs, several of which have been reported in the Emerald periodically, include:

(1) **Educational functions.** GPA panels have spoken to sociology, psychology, CSPA, health and other classes about the dimensions of life for gay people in American society, problems they face in confronting discrimination, myths and constant "put downs," the goals of the gay liberation movement, etc. Such panels benefit students who at least occasionally have had homosexual feelings but have never heard the issue spoken about in an open, positive, non-threatening discussion.

(2) **Political functions.** GPA has been working for legislation to ban discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation." This work has been on both the city and state levels. Such legislation would provide legal protection, and psychological relief, for thousands of homosexuals in the state who live with the constant fear of losing their jobs or homes if their personal

"secret" is found out by an employer or landlord. Homosexuals on and off campus, many of whom show no open interest in GPA, will benefit when these efforts finally prove successful. And these homosexuals, I would remind straight students who are less than supportive, may include some of your own friends, roommates, siblings, co-workers and acquaintances.

(3) **Speakers, movies, and dances.** Our budget provides very little for such activities; we'll have to get funding from the Cultural Forum to sponsor more of these events. Speakers, like panels, perform an educational function for all students. GPA arranged for Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon (co-authors of the book *Lesbian-Woman*) to speak on campus on April 2. They were the first open homosexuals who have ever spoken to a U of O audience. Given that the University is 100 years old, it's hard to believe that the topic has been avoided for so long. It's about time we begin discussing the issue — for everybody's sake.

Gay people have a legitimate right in asking for gay dances. We have no intention of excluding "straight" people from them. In fact, if more straight people would dance, talk and socialize with gay people, a lot of the myths and stereotypes that they believe would break down. Presently, if two men or two women dance together during an EMU dance, they get stared at, are the target of derogatory comments, etc. If straight people can feel relaxed at dances held almost every

week, then gay people should be able to feel similarly relaxed at least once or twice a term. Thus we are justified in wanting dances geared to the gay community.

Most movies presently shown on campus are oppressive to gay people. They either portray only heterosexual relationships, as though assuming homosexuals don't exist, or else the few movies that deal with homosexuality at all portray it in a negative or distorted way. (*Sunday Bloody Sunday*, shown this winter, was a rare exception to this pattern.) Both to educate audiences about the variety of lifestyles of gay people and to break down myths and stereotypes, as well as simply to provide movies which gay people can relate to, it is imperative that — at least occasionally — movies be presented which relate to homosexual life more positively.

The writers of the letter say that they "hate to see such a large percentage of our fees to support a cause (they) do not believe in." \$1,280, out of a total budget approaching \$1,000,000, is hardly a large percentage. But if it does bother these individuals, fine! Only I would hope that, if they won't finance GPA, they'll likewise agree to give me back the money I pay for the athletics department (\$150,000 total budget allotment) and for the ASUO executives (we give them \$46,000). For these expenditures rarely, if ever, serve me. The fact is that each GPA member pays \$57 a year in incidental fees. If we can't get anything back in the form of fun-

ding of activities we want and need, then give the 70 or 80 of us who are regular GPA members (plus the hundreds who come occasionally during the course of the year) our money back. We would have a hell of a lot more money to work with than the \$1,280 we will be receiving.

The basic argument of the four who wrote the letter is that the IFC — and, by implication, Randy — is placing Day Care lower in priority than GPA. The fact is that Randy has been the most vocal member of the IFC committee in supporting incidental fee funding for Day Care. It so happens that he is the only IFC member to vote for Day Care funding every time the issue has been voted upon. It is Jeff Jefferson, who supports the 11 per cent increase in the already huge athletic department allocation, who is against funding Day Care.

I might note that Randy and I were both at Monday's sit-in demonstration, sponsored by Day Care workers, parents, children, and supporters, to convince the new ASUO executives to support Day Care funding. I wonder if the four who wrote the letter attacking GPA were at this demonstration — or if they were too busy writing their letter to spend their time learning the facts of the situation and supporting their cause more constructively.

Note: Mr. Harris is a graduate in Sociology and a member of the Gay People's Alliance.

Proposed Co-op change: high-gloss rip-off?

By Andy Gill

Before the members of the University of Oregon Cooperative Store (Co-op) is a proposal which, if passed, would change the Co-op to a non-profit corporation. The purpose of this article is to detail the implications of the proposals and outline the effects of the change.

How the Co-op is Organized

Presently, each student or faculty member of the University of Oregon is eligible to join the Co-op. The Co-op's membership procedure is a simple one. On paying a fifty-cent membership fee, a person becomes eligible to receive a rebate at the end of the year. All the member need do is save the sales receipts and turn them in to the Co-op before June 30, of each year. When the amount of "profit" is determined the percent rebate which can be paid is figured and then checks are mailed to each member reflecting the percent of his purchase. In recent years the percent rebate has been about six percent of the purchase price. Some of you may remember a few years ago when the rebates were as high as ten percent. However, with the increased costs of operation, greater competition, and the failure of the University to adopt a pre-registration plan, this decrease is understandable. Yet, our Co-op and the one at Oregon State University are the only two on the west coast which pay a rebate.

The Co-op is managed by a ten-member board of directors composed of eight students and two faculty members. The board is responsible for the successful operation of the Co-op, but hires a full-time manager to help with management. If you don't like store policies then you should complain to the board of directors and not the manager.

The Proposed Changes

The central proposed change to the Co-op is a simple one. Instead of having a cooperative with a membership requirement and rebates, the co-op would be dissolved and reformed as a non-profit corporation. In effect, some prices would be lowered, but there would be no year-end rebate.

Problems With the Change

1. A few years ago, an astute board of directors successfully pursued federal tax exemption for the Co-op. While the application process was both lengthy and expensive — over \$100,000.00 in back taxes was refunded to the Co-op. And currently the Co-op saves over \$30,000.00 per year in federal tax. If the Co-op changes to a non-profit corporation most probably the current tax exemption will be lost. In order to possibly regain the tax exempt status the lengthy and costly application process must be repeated. However, if the current proposal were forestalled until an opinion could be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service concerning the proposed corporation, several thousand dollars might be saved.

In addition, the proposed change has already forced the Co-op to abandon a state court tax suit involving state tax exemption for the Co-op. And, of course money has already been spent to pay legal fees for this suit.

2. While having good intentions, the current board of directors has proposed these changes at the wrong time. First, the membership was not consulted with the plan for the proposed change. Second, the official voting meeting is to be held June 6, 1973, during Spring term

finals week. Obviously, those few students remaining that day will be pre-occupied with finals. Third, the letter which accompanied the ballot clearly avoided discussing any of the negative aspects of the change. Fourth, little attempt has been made to publicize the change. Fifth, NO STUDY HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PROPOSED PLAN IS EVEN FEASIBLE.

In short, it appears the current board is railroading this proposal through without fully explaining its ramifications to the members.

3. If these proposals are passed a new set of by-laws must be written. Under this proposal the board of directors will have the sole authority to write the new by-laws. The Oregon laws relating to non-profit corporations are found in Chapter sixty-one of the Oregon Revised Statutes. The statutes provide substantial leeway in many areas including the powers and duties of the directors and the number of directors. IT IS CLEARLY UNETHICAL FOR A BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO WRITE ITS OWN BY-LAWS. This one fact by itself is adequate reason to defeat the proposed changes. The logical and fair alternative is to submit the by-law for voter approval.

4. As was mentioned in the letter accompanying the ballot, the income from the federal tax exemption, and the unclaimed rebate, accrues at about \$50,000.00 per year. Currently this money from recent years is being held in bank accounts. The question comes how can this money be used to benefit the Co-op's members.

In any business such as the Co-op, the cost of operation (overhead) combined with the wholesale price of the item will determine the cost of that item, in most cases. Because of the federal tax exemption, unclaimed rebates can not be directly refunded. However, the Co-

op has a \$400,000.00 long-term mortgage. Much of the money not rebated to members could be used to reduce the mortgage payments which would in turn lower the overhead which would in turn facilitate the lowering of prices.

Conclusion: How to Vote

If you trust the board of directors enough to allow it to determine its own by-laws; are willing to do away with the Co-op's federal tax exemption; would rather gamble with the possibility of having lower prices on a few items in exchange for no year-end rebate, then you should vote "yes" on the proposed change.

If however, you like the present rebate system; like the \$30,000.00 per year federal tax exemption; believe, as a member, you should have a say in what the board of directors does; would rather consider the proposed changes openly and in more detail next fall, then you should vote "no."

Change is often necessary. But is it worth it to HASTILY change in hopes of achieving something better when there is no study showing there will be an improvement, and, in fact where there would be a distinct possibility of a loss of services. I suppose the question is, are you as a member willing to risk losing a store which although not perfect provides a valuable and necessary service on the mere conjecture that what will result MIGHT be an improvement?

If you are confused as to how you should vote, I urge you to attend a special meeting which is to be held June 1, 1973 at 12:30 p.m. in Fenton Hall on the University campus.

Note: Law student Andy Gill is a member-elect (effective June 8) of the Co-op Board of Directors.