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Photo by Perry Gaskill

Where's the fireworks?

While all the bustling and celebrating of the nation's 200th birthday seemed to occupy cities like New York, Philadelphia and Eugene, the University scene remained unusually quiet. Parades, a march for peace, and the traditional Fourth of July lets-go-on-a-picnic

phenomena busied most Eugeneans. The fireworks display at Autzen Stadium cornered the attention market though as the displays were bigger and better, some even saluting the University Centennial and the Fighting Ducks.

Gays banding together against harassment

By KATHY CRAFT
Of the Emerald

When workers at Starflower, a west Eugene natural foods distributor employing a large number of gay persons, arrived at work June 28, they were greeted by an ugly surprise. During the night, vandals smashed the windshields of two trucks parked in front of the collective with slabs of concrete and hurled rocks through the paneled front window. A note was attached to one of the rocks with a short, simple message: "Queer."

Starflower employees believe the gay rights march in Eugene the previous day (June 27) triggered the incident. "We feel it's a reaction to the march and recent publicity," John Damon, a truck driver for the operation, explained. "We're a target because there are a lot of gay workers in our business."

Ironically, that march was organized, in part, to protest a recent wave of similar anti-gay episodes in Eugene. According to Jai Roberts, a member of the University Gay Peoples Alliance

(GPA), incidents of harassment and vandalism directed towards the gay community increased dramatically during the last six months. "It's not just the usual calling people names and hassling them on the street," he explains. "It's up front, physically destructive harassment." Examples include:

- Vandals tossed a rock through the front window of a west Eugene business owned by lesbians in early May. Similar to the Starflower incident, an attached note said "queers are not welcome here." Previously, the words "Lezzie death soon" were written in marker pen near the door of the business.

- During the past three months at the Riviera Room, a downtown Eugene bar frequented by gays, vandals splattered paint on the outside wall, pieces of liver and a dead opossum were left near the doorway, and eggs were thrown at patrons entering the bar. In addition to these acts, the automobile of the non-gay owner was vandalized.

- A gay man, who also received

telephone calls threatening his life, recently discovered the windshield of his car smashed and the word "queer" sprayed across the side in fluorescent paint.

- Last winter an advertisement for the "Lane Organization for the Elimination of Queers" was discovered on a bulletin board at Lane Community College. According to the announcement, the purpose of the group was to spread "the news that there are quite a number of queers in Lane County" and to organize "vigilante groups to vandalize the lousy queers right out of Lane County." The meeting time and place listed in the ad were identical to those of weekly GPA meetings. Roberts believes the intent was to assemble persons with violently anti-gay sentiments to attack, or at least harass, GPA members. The effort apparently failed, although gravel was thrown into the window of the GPA meeting place during a meeting.

Roberts said the incidents "have definitely resulted in a change of attitude among the gay community," a more militant attitude. "We're sick of this hap-

pening," he said.

Ellen, one of the lesbians who operates the business which was attacked in May, agrees.

"This is unifying the gay community," she explains, adding she and her co-workers prefer not to be identified because "publicity draws attack."

"It dramatizes once again," she continues, "the kind of shit we have to deal with. But it deals our resistance against it," she emphasized. "We've got to get it across to these people that they're

not supported by anyone in Eugene, that they're talking to the wall."

Roberts, Ellen and Barbara, another lesbian, all acknowledge the recent events have promoted unity between lesbians and gay men, which in Eugene, as elsewhere is not well established. "There's definitely more communication now between gaymen and lesbians," Ellen said.

There's more interest now in forming political ties," Roberts (Continued on Page 5)

New ODE deadlines

The *Emerald* will be published on Tuesdays through the eight-week summer session.

The deadlines for submissions to be used in the Et Al and Briefs columns is Friday, 5 p.m.

The editorial page will be published periodically, material permitting. Letters to the

editor should be typed triple-spaced with a 65-unit line, and should be limited to 250 words. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit longer letters and potentially libelous material.

The deadline for display ads is Thursday noon, and the deadline for classified ads is Thursday 1 p.m.