

CSPA study finds hustler situation grim

By CHARLOTTE FOX
Of the Emerald

Visualize the downtown streets of Eugene on any given night. Then picture a girl of about 15, illuminated by a street light, on 6th Avenue. A man drives by, recognizes her, and stops. She climbs into his car and disappears with him. A half hour later, she's back on the street, a few more dollars in her pocket.

According to Sheryll Burgess, a CSPA social work senior who has spent the last six months studying the prostitution situation in Eugene, the picture is pretty grim. She estimates there are about 40 prostitutes in the city, and three-fourths of them are under age 18.

Burgess says she's been interested in the world's oldest profession since her adolescence in Spokane, Washington. She says that she had known a few pimps and even toyed with the idea of becoming a prostitute. "Of course," she adds, "as I grew up that idea changed."

Now she wants to help prostitutes through what she terms "preventative" work, helping to divert women who may be on the verge of becoming hookers.

Besides being a full-time student, Burgess works at the Christian Family Institute, a shelter home here in Eugene, where she first came into contact with prostitutes sent there by Community Social Services.

Burgess says she's become friends with some of the prostitutes, although they're still hesitant to give her information necessary to continue her research.

"I'm not a legitimate part of their system," she says.

Because the younger girls are at the bottom, Burgess says they often don't make any money from their tricks, but usually turn it over to their pimps in return for dinner or maybe a new dress. "Many of the younger girls are in love with their pimps," she adds, "and willingly turn over all their money."

Burgess' study has revealed that many of the girls are not necessarily from the "lower west side of town." She



Drawing by Sarah Rogers

says many of the girls come from middle and upper class families. Many of the girls still live at home, and their parents don't know they're prostitutes, or don't know what to do about it. Some live with their pimps, Burgess contends.

What makes a girl become a prostitute, especially at 12 or 13 years old? Burgess offers many reasons — primarily emotional and physical needs the girls have that aren't met at home or in school. She says some of the girls are also attracted by the seemingly "glamorous" lifestyle.

Many of the girls Burgess has seen equate any attention with being loved and cared for. That is why many fall in love with their pimps.

Burgess describes pimps as "charming and perceptive fellows, who can easily pick up on the needs of the young girls." She reports that most Eugene pimps have only one or two prostitutes, so a pimp in this city can maintain a relationship with his girl.

Before the city ordinance banning loitering in Eugene for the purposes of prostitution was passed last October, Burgess says many of the 15 pimps operating in the city

would practice "active recruitment" by hanging out in the mall, at discos or at the fairgrounds. However, she says the ordinance has made that practice a little tougher, and some pimps have left town.

The customers are responsible for prostitution, in Burgess' opinion.

Being a supporter of prostitution is expensive. "From what I understand, the girls here don't have to take less than \$35 per trick if they don't want to," Burgess says.

Burgess thinks the recent city ordinance did not alleviate the prostitution problem, it just made it less visible. Most of the community is not aware of the extent of the problem.

Burgess wants to set up a long term outreach program with those people involved in the prostitution world. We'd like to give the girls an alternative before they enter the profession.

"I don't want to be a social bandage," she says. "It's important to maintain community interest and support. The problem's big, but I think it's still manageable."

Boe: Energy will be key legislative issue

By KARL KOERPER
Of the Emerald

Assuring that he's not given up on educational finance reform after the defeat of his "safety net" proposal, Senate President Jason Boe stressed that energy concerns will be the key issue in the next legislative session.

Boe, D-Reedsport, spoke before the Lane County Labor forum Friday.

Raising the question of whether there is a true energy shortage or one just contrived, Boe said, "I happen to believe that we are facing an imminent crisis in energy." He also noted that the energy issue has been a victim of "extreme rhetoric" from both sides.

Asking where the Northwest would get its power in coming years, he countered criticism of his non-support for raising the aluminum industry's rates, saying that the

resulting loss of jobs is a key consideration.

"Jobs can be taken away from us and can be located in different areas of this country, and even more seriously, can be located in different countries," warned Boe.

Although some people are worried about the state's electricity rates, Boe said that, "comparatively, Oregon's rates are still among the lowest in the country."

He pointed out New Yorkers pay \$95 for 1,000 kilowatts of power, while Portlanders pay \$25 for the same amount and Eugeneans pay only \$15. However, Boe warns the benefit enjoyed by the Northwest is vulnerable.

"The greatest danger to the entire Northwest lies not in bills but in Congress looking at those same figures. It causes them to cast covetous looks upon this most tremendous natural resource that we have in the Northwest and that is our hydroelec-

tric power system," he said.

Boe next turned his attention to a dispute between the City of Portland and the Bonneville Power Administration, (BPA). Portland, served by a private energy utility, was denied priority status as a customer by BPA because that power is reserved for areas served by public utility districts. Boe applauded a recent move by the state Emergency Board to deny Portland funding to finance its suit.

"Any lawsuit that will reduce the power bills for any other area by the use of that 'change in the preference clause' is going to be paid for by the people of Eugene and the people of Springfield and the people of every public utility district in this state," he claimed.

Turning to the issue of nuclear power, Boe said it could serve as a stopgap measure until alternative energy technologies are devised.

"It's (nuclear energy) neither the end of the world nor the salvation of the future. It's simply one tool, and we've got to decide whether to use that tool until our technology develops alternate energy sources. I think we have to use that tool for a while."

The solution to the Northwest energy problem, according to Boe, "is a regional approach on an equitable basis" for the distribution and pricing of energy.

Boe concluded that the energy crunch could be resolved only if, "we seek an area-wide accommodation that is fair to everybody."

Responding to a question on his future political plans, Boe said he, as well as everybody else, is awaiting the political decision of former Gov. Tom McCall. Boe said he is not interested in a fourth-district congressional race against Jim Weaver, but is considering both the U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races.

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