

Gays rally, say rights issue not dead

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

About 200 gay rights supporters rallied in downtown Eugene Saturday to tell the city voters that the issue of civil rights for gay men and women had not ended with the repeal of a city ordinance against discrimination of gays.

The fight for equal rights for gays may have just begun, Carol Queen, director of the University's Gay People's Alliance, told a crowd of supporters on the Lane County Courthouse steps. That fight probably won't be won in an election, she said.

The rally was to show support for the gay rights movement that has suffered setbacks in several major cities across the nation. Following the victory of Eugene's proposition 51 on the May 27 ballot — which repealed a city ordinance giving gays the same protection as other city minorities — gay supporters and members of the newly-formed Eugene Citizens For Human Rights vowed to carry their cause into the streets if necessary.

The rally Saturday was part of a celebration commemorating the anniversary of Stonewall Day. Nine years ago, at the Stonewall Inn in New York city, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, gays resisted when the police tried a routine raid of the tavern. It was perhaps the first incident of resistance against police harassment and, for gays, it has become a symbol of their struggle for civil rights.

Queen, who spoke to supporters before a march through downtown Eugene, said the gay movement in Eugene will continue to work toward rights for all gay men and women.

Queen also called for the gay community to preserve its unity and to fight a "new right" political movement in the United States.



Photo by F.H.A.T. Axmacher

Gays march in downtown Eugene, saying their fight for rights has just begun. Director Carol Queen of the University's Gay People's Alliance

spoke to about 200 supporters on the steps of the Lane County Courthouse.

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Group disputes TV franchise

By KEVIN HARDEN
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Fifteen years is a long time for a company to have a cable television franchise, the Friends of Public Broadcasting (FPB) said Friday, so at least one more public hearing is necessary before final approval is given to the Teleprompter of Oregon Cable TV company's request for a franchise extension.

Speaking at a news conference Friday morning, the FPB group called for additional public hearings on the Teleprompter franchise agreement and addition of the proposal for a community access channel to be considered along with that franchise.

According to Catherine Lauris, head of the FPB group, additional public hearings are necessary to give each person in the community a chance to understand the complex legislation that would extend the present Teleprompter franchise in the Eugene-Springfield area for 15 more years.

"This is the first opportunity for the citizens of Eugene to have any kind of input into the franchise negotiations at all," said Sharon Genasci, chair of the FPB television committee. "What we're dealing with here is an extremely complex piece of legislation."

Although the Teleprompter company proposed to add an additional 102 hours of public access to KOZY, the company's commercial station, that still wouldn't provide the same service as a community access channel, Lauris said.

"To all intents and purposes Teleprompter does have a monopoly in this area and I'm sure there aren't any other cable companies that could move in right now," Lauris said. "So, a company as large as Teleprompter should provide some sort of public service to the community."

That public service would more than likely be a community access channel separate from Kozy, she said.

At a two-and-one-half hour public hearing Thursday evening, several Eugene citizens and FPB members asked the Teleprompter company not only to provide a community access channel, but asked that the company also fund such a station through its profits. While that request has yet to be approved by the Teleprompter company, it was approved by the Lane County commissioners in their regular meeting last week.

During the public hearing, Bill Bresnan, president of Teleprompter Corporation's national cable division, told the Metropolitan Cable Television/Translator commission that his company's request for an increase in subscriber rates would be dropped. That request had stood in the way of the franchise approval.

Although no action has been taken on a two-year-old proposal for a community access channel submitted to the television/translator commission, Lauris said the time may be right for such a channel.

The channel, which would be different from existing educational or public broadcasting channels, would provide television air time to any community group with something to say, Lauris said. It could also provide live televised broadcast of governmental proceedings, community events and public hearings, she said.

"We would, of course, be totally delighted if our proposal were adopted in total," Lauris said. "I think we are sufficiently realists to recognize that the art of government rests in compromise."

"Though we may not get just exactly what we've asked for, I'm sure that something is going to happen so that we'll get what we want," she said.

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