



By MELODY WARD
For the Emerald

Asian American students are trying to create awareness among themselves and other ethnic groups through the Asian American Student Union, Director Sonny Kim says.

"Our concerns are not just with other Asian Americans, but also with other minority groups. Last year we helped sponsor the Bakke symposium," Kim says.

The student union plans cultural events, offers classes, and brings guest speakers to campus in an effort to share the Asian American heritage with the University community. Winter term, they plan to air a radio show on KLCC featuring music and Asian American literature.

Student group shares its heritage

Guest speakers, cultural events highlight Asian American effort

"This year in May we plan to hold the Pacific Northwest Asian American conference," Kim says. In February, he adds, the union will co-sponsor a multi-cultural, historical symposium with other ethnic student unions.

The Asian American Student Union was formed in 1972. "The idea of an Asian American identity is pretty new," Kim says. "We're trying to define it on our own terms."

Asian Americans often feel pulled between their ties to Asian culture and their Western heritage, he adds. "Partly, it is to not deny that part of you is Asian," Kim explains. "It (the Asian American experience) is really hard to define."

The AASU is building a library of Asian American literature and history, which Kim says can be used by students in Ethnic studies and other minority education

courses, or as a resource for persons interested in minority issues.

"In general, we represent and advocate Asian American needs and interests," Kim says, "especially educational rights."

The creation of the Minority Education Council has given Asian Americans a voice in policy making for minority education classes, he adds. "The council tries to propose classes that will include minorities in courses, to gain more knowledge."

"When we are included in (American) history, it's always a distorted image," he explains. "It's hard to get a clear image of who we really are, until Asian Ameri-

cans can present their own perspective.

"The ultimate goal is to be fully accepted, to be able to participate on our own terms as Asian Americans, not as white Asians or as white American's concept of what an Asian American is," he adds. "I don't think they have a concept--we're either strictly foreign or we're forced to accept the values and beliefs of the white majority."

While the union is geared toward Asian Americans--"Asians who were born in the U.S. and-or adopted by an American family"--Kim says it is also open to exchange students.

Currently, the AASU has nearly 35 active members and holds frequent meetings to plan for cultural events and social activities. "There are no guidelines on membership or dues," Kim says. "Interested students are welcome to drop by any time."

Kim says the union also operates a "Big Brother-Big Sister" program for new students, so persons unfamiliar with the University or from outside the United States won't have to "go it alone."

Students interested in learning more about the AASU can call 686-4342. The union is located in room 12 EMU, across from the bowling alley.

Eugene citizens struggle to free political prisoners

By DAVID OLMOS
For the Emerald

Eugene isn't Camp David or the United Nations, but local people are nonetheless working toward international peace through a branch of a Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization.

Amnesty International, A London-based international organization, is dedicated to freeing non-violent prisoners and ending the use of torture around the world, according to a Eugene member.

The Eugene group first met about four years ago after Joan Baez gave a benefit concert at MacArthur Court to help launch the group.

Susan Maxwell, Diane Fleishman and Dan Callahan attended the first Eugene meeting.

"My husband and I were not involved in anything political then. It seemed like the right thing to do," Fleishman recalls.

Kristi Fassler said she got involved after living in Guadalajara, Mexico. "I saw a prison in Mexico and it's conditions and wanted to get in a group that would do something about such things," she said.

The Eugene chapter is known

as an "adoption group" with the AI organization. Adoption groups work to free their prisoners, who have already met certain AI requirements.

These prisoners must not have been involved in any violent actions and cannot be from the same country as the adoption group.

For instance, AI did not aid political activist Angela Davis when it found out she had had connections with violent groups. Also a United States group could not take the case of any U.S. prisoners, such as an American Indian Movement figure.

Adoption groups work to free their prisoners by writing letters to appropriate government, prison and embassy officials. Sometimes prisoners themselves are contacted, when they can be reached, as are their friends and relatives.

seldom, if ever, overwhelming. In many situations members cannot be sure their letters are received and news of the prisoners condition remains a mystery.

"But sometimes after twelve months of silence you hear something. It's really remarkable and we really feel that what we do has an effect," said Fleishman.

And they do succeed. As an in-

ternational group, the apolitical Amnesty International has had results; of the 16,000 prisoners aided since its start in 1961 10,600 have been released through the efforts of about 168,000 members in 107 countries.

Recently the Eugene chapter received news of the release of two of its prisoner cases, Mohamed Osman Gisoor of Sudan and Sergio Gomes de Silva of Brazil.

As a group dedicated to human rights, AI's opposes capital punishment in all cases.

Callahan hopes the Eugene group takes some action on the Oregon Ballot Measure which would reinstate the death penalty.

Callahan says the ballot measure has been overshadowed by other measures, and the public is largely unaware that it will be voting on the issue.

"I think it would be a backward step for this country, because capital punishment is not practiced in most other industrialized countries," Callahan adds.

Further information about the organization and its next meeting can be obtained by calling 345-6075 or 484-9309.

NOTICE!

STUDENT INSURANCE

The date to purchase ASUO Student Health Insurance has been extended to October 20, 1978, and may be purchased **only** at the office of Metzker & Associates, 870 East 13th Ave., Eugene, Or 97401

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DATES & TIMES:

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