

# GPA

## Gay People's Alliance works to erase loneliness from homosexual community

By DAGMAR OBEREIGNER  
Of the Emerald

The isolation and loneliness of gays in Eugene is a picture the Gay People's Alliance on campus is trying to change, says GPA director Carol Queen.

"Seventy percent of the work we do with gay people is helping them get to people they can relate to," says Queen. Finding a supportive peer group is a major problem for gays, whom Queen says must find their peer group, unlike heterosexuals.

Gay People's Alliance offers services from counseling and legal referrals to a housing board for gays wanting to room with other homosexuals. The office is a place where gays can find others to talk to, while a rap group held every Wednesday aids in the forming of a "peer group on campus," Queen says.

Staffer Anna Santucci emphasizes GPA's role of "helping gays help each other."

"The larger society's not going to be there for you when you need it," she says. Gay People's Alliance is an outlet for gay people—"gays know that what they need is there, especially escape from the isolation they're in," she adds.

Non-gays come in after finding out that a friend or sibling is gay to learn more about the gay lifestyle. Additionally some gays are referred to GPA by non-gay friends, which illustrates that "we're a campus force people know about," says Queen, "we have credibility with at least some of the non-gays on campus."

About two-thirds of those who come into the office are men, says Queen, because gay women in the Eugene community already have more outlets than men—from karate workshops to a gay women's bookstore—while men's only outlet is GPA.

The GPA weekly rap group, however, has about a 50-50 male to female ratio, she adds.

About 30 persons visit the office regu-

larly, and another 20 come in occasionally, says Queen. Every term about 30 students come in to the office for research and to check out books from GPA's small library.

Queen is pleased with the turnout this term. "We've seen three times as many people as we did all last year," she says.

The closest those isolated individuals come to being reached, she continues, is during 'Gay Pride Week,' when gays are in the forefront. "at least in the newspaper pages." Gay Pride Week also reaches those non-gays who "don't want to hear about" the gay movement, she adds.

The event is held to draw the attention of new students and to involve them, says Queen. Almost one-third of GPA's \$2,806 in Incidental Fee Committee funding goes toward the week of events, usually held fall term.

This year, Pride Week will be held in the spring, by which time GPA will have been at least "quasi-visible" for two terms, says Queen.

A keynote speaker, films, panels on being gay, and a dance are some of the activities planned. The week focuses on "cultural and educational events, gives a chance to interact with gay and non-gay students and community, and tries to bring some issues into the open a little bit," says Queen.

Gay People's Alliance has been active since 1969. One of the oldest gay groups in the nation, GPA is also the oldest organized gay group in Oregon, says Queen.

Gay People's Alliance moved on campus and obtained IFC funding in 1973. Its basic premise has never changed, says Queen.

"We are a service to the gay community and an educational service to the non-gay community."

What kind of atmosphere for living does Eugene offer to the gay person? Queen says she "loves it" and says other gays have moved here from larger



Photo by Doug Williams  
Carol Queen, director of the Gay People's Alliance, says the organization is providing counseling and other services to homosexuals to help alleviate the isolation many gays experience. About 30 people come into the office regularly and several others drop in occasionally, she says.

cities, and like its close-knit atmosphere.

The Eugene gay community is diverse, she adds, but at the same time, "when something happens like Ballot Measure 51 last spring, we can pretty much pull together."

Measure 51, repealing Eugene's Gay Rights Ordinance, passed, despite the overall pro-gay stance of the university community.

"The gays are more integrated into the city as a whole because of its size," says Queen, who adds that she still finds that Eugene is an alienating city however, in which gays run into conflicts "all

the time. But," she adds, "they seem to be resolved a little easier here."

Does the GPA foresee any new legislation for its cause?

"It's more important to put energies in other areas first," says Queen. "There's more we need to do before legislation would be really valid. Maybe by the time we get that work done, that kind of legislation won't be necessary at all," she says hopefully.

"As long as there are people who don't know what it is to be a gay person, and

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## Milk assassination leaves nation's gays leaderless

The shooting of San Francisco's first openly elected gay city official has left gay activists wondering who will emerge as the movement's leader.

Police say the death of Harvey Milk, assassinated Monday along with San Francisco mayor George Moscone, is not linked to his homosexuality. But many gay spokespersons aren't sure.

"I would be surprised to find that it had nothing to do with his being gay," says Carole Queen, director of the University's Gay People's Alliance.

"That would be too coincidental." Queen says Moscone was very supportive of gay rights and had been

elected with help from the city's large and outspoken homosexual community, an estimated one-sixth of the city's population.

She thinks the event might be an indication that the gay movement is being born through a phase as serious as that of the black civil rights struggle of the sixties.

"An assassination—no matter what the cause—is going to bring people up short," she says. "Harvey was an example for all of us...we want to treat the incident as the kind of societal oppression that we are up against."

Milk, the first avowed homosexual elected to the city's board of super-

visors, led the opposition to an anti-gay rights measure, which was defeated Nov. 7 in the first statewide victory for gay rights in the nation. He was considered the movement's leader, Queen says.

Dan White, a former supervisor who was one of the most vocal opponents of the homosexual community, has been charged with the murders.

Just prior to the shooting, White apparently was pleading with the mayor to regain his job as supervisor, which he had resigned.

White was the only supervisor to vote against a homosexual rights ordinance introduced by Milk this year, and the only

supervisor to vote against closing Market Street for the Gay Freedom Day parade in June, which drew 240,000 people.

The Eugene gay community will gather to share their grief over the shooting at a memorial service in the Wesley Center Sunday.

David Pellitier, new pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church, will be one of the speakers for the service. Queen says many gay activists are concerned for their own safety since the shooting.

Whatever the cause behind the killing, Queen says, one thing is certain. The gay community has lost a beloved and respected leader.



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