

Jails no place for TV hearings

Lane County jail, which has lots of its inmates sleeping on the floor in its old facilities, now wants to put them in front of closed-circuit TV.

The county's jail superintendent, Capt. Paul Bailey, has proposed installation of a closed-circuit television system, which could, among other uses, link inmates' cells with the courtroom for electronic arraignments.

In the words of the innovating official, "The defense attorney would be here (in the jail) with his client, and the prosecution would be over in the courtroom with the judge. And you don't have to move people."

The TV set-up would save time, effort and money, according to Bailey.

Well, in general we don't expect jailers to focus on the needs of their prisoners, but rather to consider measures for their security and convenience value to jail operations.

So, Bailey has not really failed our expectations but he has failed in the matter of prisoner rights.

The proposal for electronic court procedures denies an accused person the constitutional right of confronting his accusers, the judge, jury and officers of the court.

Such "modernizations" reek of the secret tribunal, the dungeon (admittedly with better lighting) and a certain medievalism in attitudes about a jailer's domain.

Intimidation, even forced pleas could be accomplished within the closed environment of a jail only tenuously connected with the public realm of the courtroom.

Fortunately, Bailey doesn't hold final authority in implementing his proposal.

And those who have the authority, don't have the jailer's enthusiasm for the innovation. Circuit Court Judge Roland Rodman, while noting that the TV set has been used in Oregon trials in which the defendant had become unruly, remains skeptical about its use for reasons of "economy or convenience." He could well have in mind the dehumanizing quality that television could force on judge and jurors for whom the defendant becomes just a distant figure on a screen.

Beyond the legal issues lies a more basic, human consideration: the psychological and emotional impact of imprisonment.

Anyone who has been on the wrong side of the bars, knows that each moment outside the cell has an intrinsic value. Journeys to court — like weekend furloughs, work release and recreational excursions — mean a momentary escape from bondage.

Lane County doesn't need the one-stop legal service envisioned by the proposal. The county could save considerable expense in time and tax money by just forgetting about it.



YOURS

A quack remedy

On Dec. 5 John Crowley reported in the Emerald on the growth group Awareness Realization Actualization Seminars and its leader Bob Trask. Crowley explained that Trask and his company ARAS purportedly offer the public a process and system that will allow one to understand oneself and accompanying belief systems.

A belief system is the result of impressions attitudes and observations one has been subjected to for one's entire life.

The result after his training, Trask claims, is the ability to edit oneself and attitudes and allow one to lead a full, exciting and meaningful life. This group cannot and will not accomplish this much desired change if anything, it will hinder it.

Trask asks that you accept what he has to say. Not to believe it but not disbelieve it. What the hell does this mean?

Is it possible to believe and not believe in something at the same time? I think not.

What Trask and his associates ask you not to think but to accept. He tries to convince you that your entire life can be examined and understood in a few short days. He tells you to accept that this understanding can be translated into positive action and change again, in a few short days.

Trask's arguments are encapsulated in a series of one-liners intermixed with simplistic diagrams which seem, without close examination, to be of obvious truth. He claims his processes are open to all who wish to lead a full, exciting and growing life. Who could turn down an offer like that?

For only \$350 he and his group will lead you through a process that will show you that the problems that worry you most are not so horrible or even significant. In this respect he is finally talking straight.

In themselves these problems are not horrible but what he and his group never address is the fact that the underlying neurosis that brought about these problems are significant. Trask's processes or exercises do not, nor are capable of uncovering what is behind these problems, which

is something of infinitely more importance than the problems themselves.

What the processes do is make you high. The subject leaves the exercise with the impression that by forgetting his problems he is "cured" and ready to lead a new life. This result is what is frightening. The "cure" is much like an opiate; it covers up the symptoms yet does nothing to cure the disease. It's a quack remedy!

The problems and neurosis of ones life are the result of a lifetime of experiences, attitudes and influences much of which occur on the unconscious level. A few hours, days or even months of ARAS or for that matter any growth group can not even hope to uncover the background of ones personality much less allow one to change those aspects one feels undesirable.

Trask in reality offers a love and support high that will temporarily alleviate the symptoms of underlying neurosis. He offers a few phrases to administer to these problems and a group of fellow believers to offer support.

The sad result is people who unwittingly cover up or hide their neuroses and find a group who supports this hiding. Trask gets his money; you get your high. He gets a full and exciting life living off your money, and you get a group of friends who talk and think like you.

Douglas Kornfield
Senior, Landscape architecture

Recycling a waste

After watching the men in the University garbage truck at work, I conclude that the University is engaged in recycling at the bottom-most level.

Item by item, the garbage is sorted by those men as they stand in the huge bins. Salvage is on the spot for returnable bottles and anything that might take the individual employee's fancy.

It seems to be a very time-consuming process! Can the Oregon taxpayer afford to subsidize such minute sorting of University garbage? Who controls such procedures?

Richard Seven
senior, journalism

