

Anti-abortion lobby requests legislation

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — Medical science constantly is dividing new methods to peer inside the womb. For instance, Down's Syndrome now can be detected before birth, and prospective parents are better able to decide whether to continue a pregnancy.

For some, the decision is made long before conception. An increasing number are choosing voluntary sterilization.

But what if a baby who was supposed to be born healthy is born a Mongoloid? Or someone who thought the reproductive machine had been turned off becomes pregnant?

In some states parents are allowed to bring a lawsuit charging the doctor with wrongful life — except for the doctor's mistake, this child would not have been born.

Oregon Right to Life finds such practices distasteful. The group has requested legislation prohibiting suits based on such claims.

According to Rita Radich, an attorney working with the group, HB 2070 represents the philosophy that "any life is an asset and should never be

viewed as a liability."

In a situation where sterilization fails, Radich says blocking suits from wrongful life doesn't mean people can't recover.

"You could figure damages on the mental anguish. Or perhaps the anguish of going through an operation that's not successful and has to be repeated. Those kinds of damages would be appropriate."

"But I would hate to see, and this bill tries to show, that we should not list those damages in terms of the price of a child."

Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene, a member of the House Judiciary Committee where the bill now sits, disagrees.

"The courts have to catch up with reality and recognize that life isn't always beautiful, that it costs substantial sums to raise a child."

The Right to Life group, or as Hendriksen calls it, the compulsory pregnancy movement, also has requested two other bills.

SB 363 requires the Health Division to compile and publish statistics on abortion complications. Another prohibits the use of government money for most abortions.

Rep. Peg Jolin, D-Cottage Grove, added her name to the

list of sponsors on the reporting bill but refused to sign the legislation cutting off the funds.

"I'm not certain I should have the right to tell someone they can or cannot have an abortion. I think that's a personal decision."

One sponsor of the cutoff, Sen. Mike Thorne, D-Pendleton, agrees that the decision to abort is a personal one but says that many are using abortion as a method of birth control.

"And that choice comes at the expense of others. I feel that there are other ways of accomplishing the objective of birth control short of abortion."

Another of the 10 sponsors — who don't include any of the 18 women in the Legislature — Rep. Lonnie Roberts, D-Portland, says he usually shies away from imposing his morals on other people, but he can't on the abortion issue. However, he allows that there are exceptions to every rule.

"Rape, incest, the health of the mother — these are not in the exact same line as the major question of abortion. These are exceptions."

The bill contains no provision for pregnancies that result from rape or incest.

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Hazing

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Olum said hazing lies in the "consequences" of the actions, and embarrassment and physical and mental injury constitute "hazing." Hazing is prohibited because of incidents that have resulted in injuries, he said.

"Whether (this particular incident) fits the definition of hazing gets close to semantics," Olum said. "But I think it's a mistake, and they ought to be controlled."

Hallquist, who says he was shocked to learn of the injuries, says hazing is the exception rather than the rule.

"To my knowledge, it is not a common practice."

University pledges are required, beginning last year, to sign a "hazing contract" pledging not to participate in hazing activities, Hallquist says. And while they've been helpful, Hallquist is re-examining the process to see if a problem exists.

Hallquist says fraternity life and pledge treatment is nothing like that portrayed in the film "Animal House," the hit fraternity farce filmed at the University.

"Movies like 'Animal House' really hurt us," Hallquist says. "All that stuff is bullshit. And you can quote me on that."

Hallquist says pledges are more likely to be asked to study house history and tradition and participate in small house chores or functions. But this varies among fraternities and universities, and a generalization is impossible, he says.

Hazing incidents by individual fraternity members are handled through the student conduct code and the IFC tribunal. If it is a fraternity activity, then the house is subject — if found guilty — to suspension by the University. That's the strongest

action the University can take.

Suspension effectively destroys fraternities on campus, Olum said.

"We have a waiting list of fraternities that would like to get re-established here."

Currently, Bowlin and a national Kappa Sigma alumni organization are investigating the recent accident. Their reports will be used in determining whether individuals or the fraternity will be penalized for the accident.

Hallquist says the intent of fraternities is to make pledges "good house members," and

there are local and national requirements for doing that.

But members and former members report that activities like early morning five-mile runs, forcing pledges to stay up all night and forcing naked pledges to jump into the Millrace while sorority women watch are not uncommon. Likewise, "Millracing" — tossing members into the Millrace — is not unusual.

Do these activities constitute hazing?

"It all depends on where you draw the line," says one former pledge.



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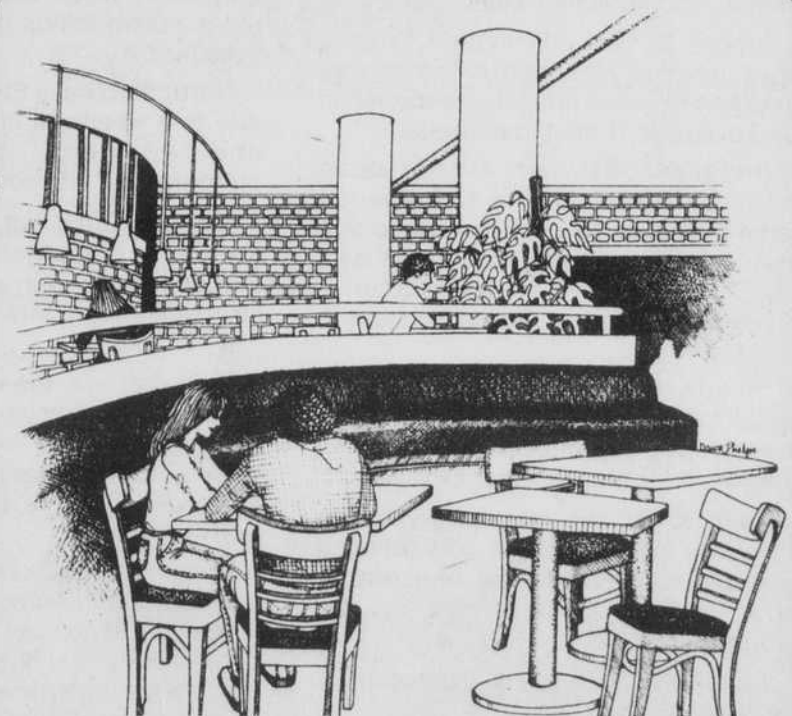
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