

System 'gone amuck'

Groups criticize pot laws

By MIKE RUST
Of the Emerald

Law abuse as well as drug abuse has advocates of liberalized marijuana laws concerned.

At a Tuesday press conference, members of People Effectively Appealing for Cannabis Equality and Oregonians Cooperating to Reduce Drug Abuse described abuses by law enforcement agencies in Klamath and Douglas counties and said such abuses occur because the law doesn't differentiate between personal and commercial marijuana use.

This results in "a legal system, which in our opinion, has gone completely amuck," said PEACE member Joe Wilson. Wilson had particularly strong words for Klamath County sheriff's.

Wilson said narcotics officers in Klamath County are using informers. After arresting informers on other charges, sheriff's deputies tell informers to frame citizens, he said.

When narcotics officers don't like elected officials' policies, they can use informers against them also, Wilson added. The Attorney General's office is investigating the wiretapping of

the Klamath County district attorney's office, he said.

"We may not have the same situation in Lane County, but when we have state laws as we do, it's important to change them because they're being used against ordinary users."

The status of several bills concerning marijuana and drug abuse under consideration by the Legislature also was discussed at the press conference.

PEACE has supported HB 2422, a bill that would outlaw the sale of drug paraphernalia to people under 18 and originally would have allowed adults to grow up to three marijuana plants for personal use. However, the House Judiciary Committee last week deleted the section on home growing while passing the bill.

Those pushing for the recognition of a distinction between commercial and personal use of marijuana are pinning their hopes on amendments to HB 2897, which was introduced at the request of Lane County District Attorney Pat Horton.

The bill, which would increase fines for possession and cultivation of over an ounce of marijuana to \$25,000 and \$50,000, was tabled with the expressed intention of amending the bill to differentiate between commercial and personal use.

Two bills that PEACE opposed — one calling for the outlaw of paraphernalia and the other calling for the prohibition of the sale of paraphernalia to people under 21 — were defeated in committee.

HB 2066, which would make selling imitation drugs and catering to drug abuse a felony, was tabled for possible amendment.

PEACE supported the bill, with an amendment calling for lower penalties, which Wilson described as being "more realistic."

Scholar describes women's inequity

By JANE DE VIRGILIO
Of the Emerald

Implementing pay equity, a national childcare policy, and a serious attack on segregation in the labor market should be the imperative goals of working women, a leading women's labor expert said Tuesday.

Alice Cook, Cornell University professor emerita and advocate of equal employment opportunity and equal pay for women, spoke on "Women, Work, and Equity" before about 50 people in the EMU.

The concept of equal pay for equal work is a historic slogan, Cook said. But it is far from a reality with only 18 percent of jobs filled interchangeably by men and women.

"Most of the 40 percent of women now in the labor force work part time, in segregated jobs, at lower pay, and in addition to caring for a home and children," Cook said.

Alleviation of lower pay can begin through the comparable worth system, Cook said. Jobs are evaluated in a system of weights and points with a similar number of points equaling a similar salary level, she explained.

Nine states will soon undertake comparable worth evaluations, Cook said. Relieving pay inequalities will be costly and difficult under current economic conditions, she added.

"I am pessimistic about further investigation into the matter by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission since Eleanor Holmes Norton is no longer overseeing that program.

"We have no concept of equal rights and duties in the home and this is why working women still carry an almost total burden of this responsibility," she said.

"We have to put more emphasis on the role of both parents in childcare."

Home responsibilities, combined with an inadequate supply of day care, creates a hardship for women who want to advance in the labor market, Cook said.

"We are also the only leading industrial nation that has no institutionalized support system for women on maternity leave and offer no guarantee she can return to her job later," Cook said.

But to correct these inadequacies, women need institutional alternatives to litigation, she said. She suggested special grievance procedures and arbitration as an effective start.

Cook cited a recent Ford Foundation study that found courts are more likely to favor minorities over women in discrimination cases. Some judges seem to believe that alleviating discrimination would result in social changes that are too sweeping, she said.

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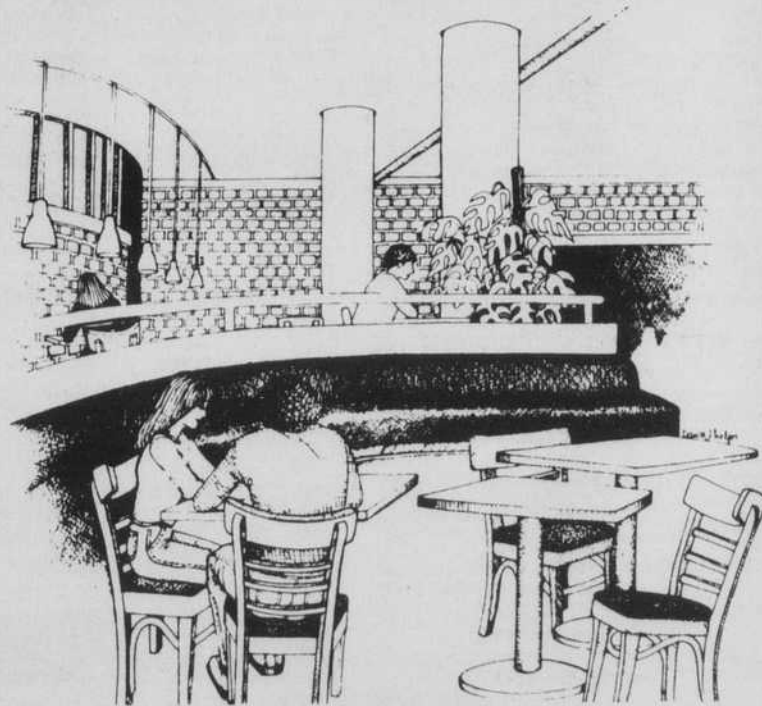
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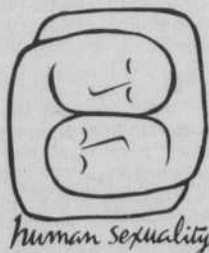
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