

Switchboard unites callers, queries

By **FRAN HANSON**
Of the Emerald

Need a ride to San Francisco? Or information about emergencies, food, jobs — even term papers?

Switchboard, a non-profit information and referral service for Lane County may have the answers.

Located downtown in a small room on the second floor of the old Tiffany building, Switchboard is a veritable information bank. Community volunteers and three staff members work with an extensive file of community organizations to connect callers with community services and resources.

"The whole idea is if you ask us a question we'll find you an answer. Occasionally we'll even help with papers, but not too much," says agency director Jay Stutz.

Switchboard connects people with mainstream or traditional social service agencies and alternative and special in-

terest groups. It also offers housing and job listings, lost and found information on pets, a free public message service, community events information and calendar and a 24-hour rideline.

The ride-share program, a kind of long-distance carpool, is free for students. Switchboard volunteers connect people who are offering rides with those who need rides.

It takes only a phone call to find out about available rides, but signing up for a ride means making a visit to the agency. Switchboard likes to make eye contact with people offering or needing rides as a screening process.

The agency also sponsors a ride board in the EMU.

According to Stutz, Christmas is the busiest time of year for ride-sharing. Although most rides are regional, the San Francisco-Eugene route is the most popular.

Another special Switchboard service is a Human Services

Directory and a Women's Yellow Pages. The directory lists 275 organizations in Lane County and costs \$20. A copy is available for use at the agency.

Like many other service agencies, Switchboard is facing funding problems.

Because of CETA cutbacks, the agency's current paid staff of three may be cut back to one in July unless other funding is found.

Currently, the agency is supported by Joint City/County Revenue Sharing funds, CETA, private donations and fundraising activities.

Switchboard began as a grassroots organization in the spring of 1969, in a small Eugene coffeehouse. At the time there was no central information center in town.

Last year when the county lost its information center, it funded Switchboard, making it

the county's official information center.

According to Stutz, that meant releasing old values and breaking into the straight "mainstream" community. The result was an agency that works for both the traditional and alternative communities.

The University plays a large part in Switchboard's success, Stutz says. The organization's 25 volunteers are University

students involved in ESCAPE or the Community Service and Public Affairs program.

Switchboard's hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The main phone number, 686-8453, becomes a recorded message after hours and their new emergency number is 343-HELP. The 24-hour rideline number is 345-7600.

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For more information
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State doctors prescribe legal abortion support

Legalized abortion gained the support of the Oregon Medical Association Sunday, but the doctors wouldn't oppose Congress' Human Rights Amendment.

An American Medical Association resolution to "strongly oppose" the amendment was called redundant by OMA members. Both the OMA and the AMA have supported legalized abortions since 1973.

But Lane County delegate Munir Katul argued that no action on the resolution would be perceived as weakening the association's support of abortion.

"Timing is important," Katul said. "Reaffirming our position does carry clout in Congress and society."

Portland physician Russell Sacco argued that bringing up

the abortion issue again "just rips apart our organization."

"What's the resolution going to change?" Sacco asked. "The AMA is committed to no government interference with abortion."

In other action the association:

- Approved development of a voluntary system to control improper prescribing of mood-altering drugs.
- Supported the concept of hospice care for cancer patients.
- Endorsed legislation that would label raw milk with a warning.
- Opposed House Bill 288, which would prohibit the regulation of fuel used in stoves and fireplaces. Doctors argued that air contamination from the use of coal could cause community health problems.

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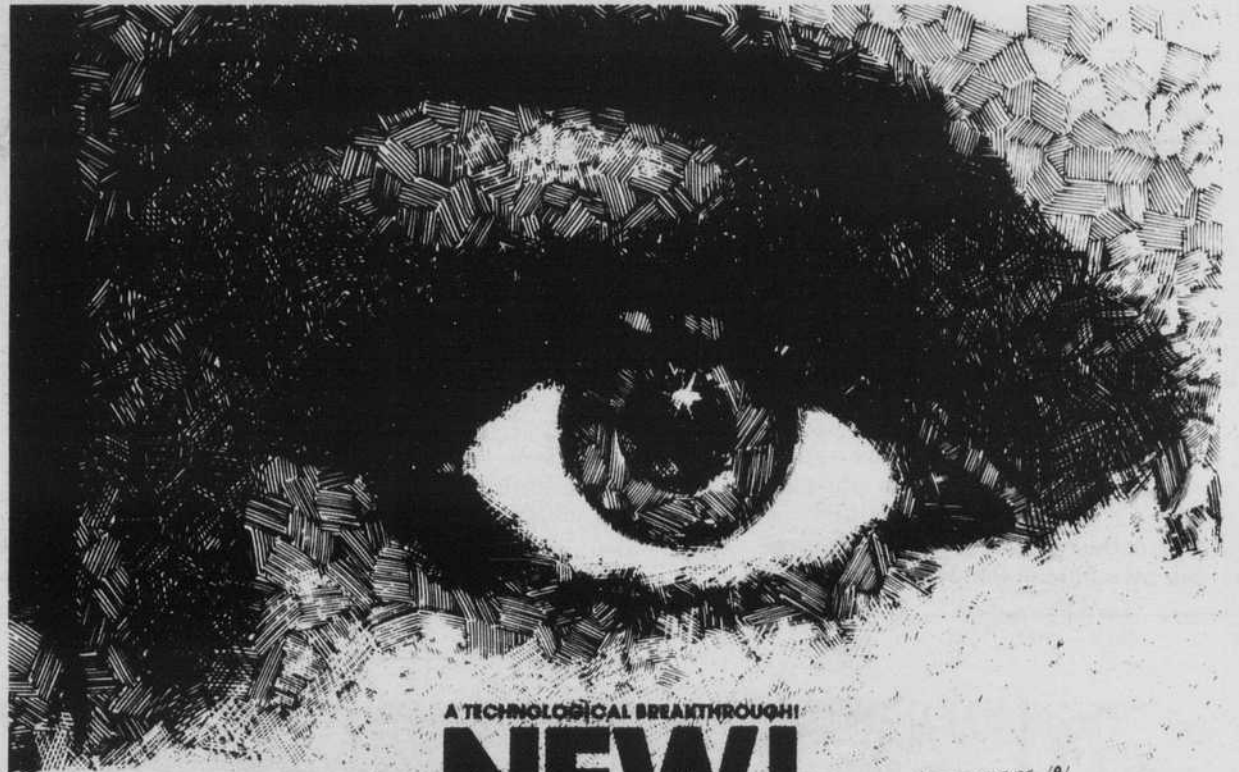
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