

# opinion

## Some good, bad odd new laws

Probably one of the most confusing aspects of American society is keeping track of all the laws that are enacted and repealed at every session of the Legislature. It's more than likely that laws are inadvertently violated simply because there are so many on the books. Who really knows what the legal statutes are and how extensive they can be?

The Oregon Legislature enacted 922 new laws in the session that ended Aug. 2. Of that 922 — 529 became effective Sunday.

Some of the 529 laws, which filled two pages in Sunday's Register-Guard, are highly specialized, while others have ramifications that will touch a majority of the people in the state.

And, yes, there are some odd ones as well — although the legislators seem to be more conscientious than in past sessions where such off-the-wall laws were temporarily inflicted on the people.

Regarding affirmative action, the legislators passed SB 680 — which declares a state policy of affirmative action in appointments to state boards, commissions and advisory bodies; and, HB 3281 — requiring community colleges and institutions of higher education to consider and maintain affirmative action plans and goals when reduction in faculty and staff is required.

HB 2882 is related to affirmative action in that it raises from 65 to 70 the maximum age for which age discrimination in employment is prohibited.

Closer to home, HB 2641 changes the name of the University's Health Science Center to Oregon Health Sciences University. HB 2513 prohibits the sale of "assignments" — those ghost-written research papers — for college credit. The maximum fine is \$1,000 for the first offense and up to \$10,000 for a second and subsequent offense.

This being Eugene, and as this area is noted for running, SB 725 and HB 2935 should please a large number of enthusiasts — especially those with chronic knee problems.

SB 725 establishes labeling requirements for DMSO, requiring description of the contents, a statement of purity, the percent of DMSO in the solution and the manufacturer's name and address. HB 2935 creates a medical advisory board to regulate DMSO in medical channels, wholesale distribution, pharmacy dispensing and labeling. This medical board will become operative when the FDA authorizes use of DMSO in Oregon.

And then again, there are the rather — how shall we put it? — curious laws.

It is now against the law, according to SB 656, to deliver an imitation controlled substance — fake dope. It has been increased to a Class A misdemeanor, carrying a one year and or \$2,500 penalty. And it is now a crime to knowingly sell a smoking device to a person under 18 years — this includes anything from cigarette papers, to bong, to whatever kind of plumbing contraption is in fashion.

SB 312 reinstates criminal penalties against obscene or anonymous phone calls, while SB 885 specifically outlaws chain letters. Another curious law is SB 169, which abolishes the Psychosurgery Review Board and removes a physician's right to perform psychosurgery, i.e. a lobotomy. The entire Emerald staff breathed a sigh of relief over that one. But it is now permissible, so says SB 596 & 597, to walk out of a restaurant clutching the remaining slosh in your liter of dinner wine. This has been called the "Doggy Bag for Wine" bill.

The most curious of all is HB 3098 which lets a court order change of sex stand in same manner as an order in change of name. It also requires the state registrar to alter birth certificate information of Oregon-born persons to reflect the change of sex or name.

In the area of the law, the Legislature enacted a solid precedent with HB 2947. This law allows the court, if the offender consents, to order community service as an alternative to jail, probation or fine. The court can designate work within the offender's capabilities and at times the offender can schedule. The limits for this community service are: 4-24 hours for violation or minor traffic offense or misdemeanor; 24-80 hours for a major traffic offense or misdemeanor; and 80-500 hours for a felony. This alternative seems to be the way many courts are going — there are certainly enough charitable organizations that can use community service workers.

The Legislature seems to have been responsive to the will and whim of the people judging by the diversity of the new laws. One that really shows the Legislature as a delegated body — with a heart — is HB 2617, which establishes Jan. 15 as a day of commemoration for a Martin Luther King.



## sally hodgkinson editor's note

As he says, Thomas Paterson Brown — the leader of Christ Brotherhood — does not look like Jim Jones. Nor does he act like him.

He talks in quiet, convincing tones. He seems more reasonable and controlled than some Bible-thumpers outside the EMU who scream and screech the gospel to an audience that ignores them.

He says he and his group simply follow the gospels — the teachings of Jesus. Fine. He says the group practices charity by giving food and shelter to transients. Okay. He says the Christian Church has strayed from the principles of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Generally true.

Therein lies the subtle danger of Christ Brotherhood — on the surface it seems harmless: What's so weird about following the gospels?

Nothing. And, from a historical Christian view, there is nothing weird about charity, living together as a family or following Christ. But brotherhood members — to distinguish themselves from historical Christianity — don't call themselves Christians. Instead, they say **they** are the true followers of Christ and his teachings — not those who call themselves Christians.

It's not the application of Jesus' teachings that sets the group at odds with Christianity. Nor the accusation that Christians aren't doing all that they should be. It's the brotherhood's interpretations of, and additions to, Jesus' teachings that go against the 2,000-year-old grain of historical Christianity and the writings of Jesus' disciples.

It's the interpretation of Luke 20 as a mandate to believers not to marry, although similar passages in Matthew and Mark

clearly show that Jesus is referring to marriage in Heaven. It's the interpretation that Jesus wasn't celibate and his disciples "weren't uptight" about sex. It's the belief that the rest of the Bible contradicts or is secondary to the gospels.

And it's the addition of several writings that Biblical scholars label "gnostic." Brown says these additional "gospels" are just "icing" on top of the four historical gospels, although the writings vastly differ from Jesus' words recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

For instance, the Gospel of Thomas records Jesus saying a woman must become male to enter the "kingdom of the sky." But in the four gospels, Jesus made it clear salvation is based on belief in him, not on gender.

Reports from former brotherhood members about the influence Brown wields over the group are also disturbing. One Colorado friend — who spent a lot of time with the brotherhood when it was in Boulder — says the group definitely is a cult. Several former members agree.

Although they haven't been proven, the charges of rape, sodomy and sexual abuse against Brown — reportedly based on interviews with brotherhood children — are also unsettling. So is Brown's refusal to answer directly to the charges.

No, Brown does not look like Jim Jones — the danger is wrapped up in a less blatant package. But Jesus warned, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name claiming, 'I am he,' and 'The time is near.'"

"Do not follow them." (Luke 21:8)

## letters

### Inhuman

I urge you not to use or purchase the Mouse-O-Leum, a cruel and inhumane mousetrap manufactured by Custom Tapes, Inc., Chicago, Ill. This device, a folded cardboard sheath with an inner surface of heavy glue and mouse-attracting scent, traps mice permanently but otherwise provides no means to kill them. They thus may linger, frightened and struggling, for days before dying of shock, dehydration, starvation, or paralysis and self-mutilation from try-

ing to escape.

I know very well that rodents often are considered pests that must be killed or removed from premises for reasons of health, etc., but they are already on the market inexpensive mousetraps which can kill swiftly and painlessly, and cage traps that do not harm the animals at all. Please use them instead.

I am supported in this fight against the Mouse-O-Leum by the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, Washington, D.C.

Pat Lambert  
Secretary, biology

### Glass house

Why did you spend two full columns of valuable newspaper space to complain that too much attention is given to Richard Nixon by the press? You know, those people in glass houses...

Also, it doesn't behoove you as an editor, a journalist or a human being to encourage anyone's death, no matter how much of a scum bag he is. Think about your responsibilities and grow up.

Norma Sax  
A non-student