

ACLU inaugurates its Eugene office

Dave Fidanque coordinates
ACLU's 10 county activities

By STEVE HOOKS
Of the Emerald

As camera crews fumbled with equipment and visitors munched bagels, the staff of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon opened the doors to its new southern district office in Eugene Tuesday.

Dave Fidanque, former aide to Rep. Jim Weaver and former reporter at KEZI-TV and KZEL-FM, is the new coordinator at the office. He will be in charge of ACLU activities in the 10-county area surrounding Eugene.

"Today is really the fulfillment of a very long dream I've had," said Stevie Remington, ACLU Executive Director, at a press conference before the open house.

A Eugene office has been on the back burner for several

years, Remington said. Until this year, the ACLU hasn't been able to afford the office space or staff for another office. Contributions from the ACLU's 3,500 members statewide made the Eugene office possible, Fidanque said.

Claudia Burton, president of the Oregon ACLU, said volunteers make up most of Oregon's ACLU staff. These volunteers include a pool of 300 attorneys, 30 from Lane County, Fidanque said.

Many outside observers think the ACLU is mainly for lawyers, Burton said. "That's not true."

The ACLU in Eugene also will work on a variety of community education projects and lobbying efforts, Burton said.

"Civil liberties live or fail at the community level," so the emphasis will be on community



Photo by Duane Schrag

Dave Fidanque answers an interviewer's question at the opening of the ACLU's Eugene office.

work, she said.

One statewide project of ACLU is the "Bill of Rights Lobby," a series of meetings dealing with congressional bills the ACLU believes threaten civil liberties.

The bills cover abortion rights, prayer in public schools, family privacy issues, increased power of the CIA and FBI, revision of the criminal code and curtailment of the Freedom of Information Act, Fidanque said.

"These bills are very dangerous tamperings with the fundamental structure of the federal government," he said.

The ACLU also refers people to other sources, such as lawyers, for help with civil liberties matters, Fidanque said. The new Eugene office means "the

services we deliver will be closer to the people," he said.

When the ACLU's Eugene office takes on a potential court case, Fidanque will do the initial screening. He will pass the information on to an ACLU volunteer lawyer. The lawyer will consult with the Southern District Lawyers Committee, which will decide to take the case or not.

The ACLU most likely will take on cases that could establish legal precedents, Fidanque said. In the six weeks Fidanque has been on the job, no cases are pending, "which have gone through the entire process," he said.

"Oregon is pretty good on civil liberties issues," Fidanque said.

Steve Schneider, president of the recently revived University ACLU, said his organization will work closely with the regional office. The Incidental Fee Committee recently approved funds for the campus ACLU, but so far the chapter's physical presence is limited to a mailbox. Schneider can be contacted through the ASUO.

Schneider said the ACLU strongly opposes draft registration and the draft. The organization will work with non-registrants if and when the government begins prosecution cases, he said.

The campus chapter also hopes to have students intern in legal, public relations and other areas at the regional office, Schneider said.

McFadden reflects, urges non-bias hiring

Bean McFadden, University affirmative action director, spoke to a crowd of about 20 Monday night in a "Last Lecture Series" speech sponsored by Campus Interfaith Ministry.

This series gives speakers a chance to reflect as if it were the last lecture they were to deliver.

McFadden, views this time in her life as a "wonderful season for assessment."

Speaking on affirmative action, McFadden said Oregon law is sometimes more strict than federal law. "Affirmative action means a widening search and more fair hiring practices," she said. Once a person is hired he or she needs support, particularly if he or she is non-traditional, she said.

McFadden said people should not believe all the "nonsense" about affirmative action quotas. "Quotas are illegal unless imposed by the courts," she said. Having one's work and aspirations devalued because of one's race or sex is "outrageous, presumptuous" she said. She called treating people differently because of race or sex "dehumanizing; second rate human behavior."

TO FORMER COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

The University of Oregon will host the Community College Conference on Wednesday, March 3, 1982. Counselors from Oregon community colleges will be on campus to meet with U of O students who previously attended community colleges. They would like to talk with you about your experience in transferring to the U of O. The information they get from you will enable them to better prepare other community college students to transfer.

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Central Oregon Community College	Room 110, EMU	1:30-3:00
Chemeketa Community College	Century Room A, EMU	1:30-3:00
Clatsop Community College	Century Room B, EMU	1:30-3:00
Linn-Benton Community College	Room 111, EMU	1:30-2:30
Portland Community College	Century Room E, EMU	1:30-3:30
Southwestern Oregon Community College	Century Room F, EMU	1:30-3:30
Umpqua Community College	Room 108, EMU	9:30-2:00

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