

Campus rape workshop dispels myths, educates

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

The Lane County Sheriff's Department is "notoriously bad" in dealing with the plight of rape victims, according to the director of Eugene's Rape Crisis Network.

At a campus rape workshop last week, Network Director Gail Wiemann discussed relations with the county sheriff's department.

"We have been told in the past few years that things are better in Lane County than most places in the country. There have been recent reports which suggest that isn't true," she said.

In one case, a 15-year-old victim was called out of class and questioned by police after specifically asking that she not be bothered at school, Wiemann said.

The department threatened another woman with a subpoena when she refused to answer questions and submitted a third victim to a lie detector test because her story changed, Wiemann said. Victims often confuse details when recovering from such a stressful crime, she said.

Donna Lovewell, Sheriff Dave Burk's chief deputy, said Wednesday that the department began investigation of Wiemann's allegations this week.

She said the department was not aware of any problems before last Thursday or Friday.

Without denying the accusations, Lovewell said that such behavior in dealing with rape victims, is "definitely not our policy."

"We try to be sensitive to those issues," she said.



She stressed that department short-handedness is "not any excuse," but added that "if you have four officers doing the work of 16, you sometimes don't have the time to spend with the cases."

The workshop also touched upon the medical aspects of rape, Rape Trauma Syndrome and ways to help a victimized friend.

"Rape Culture," a film about the dangers of society's casual attitude toward rape, featured the opinions of passers-by and present and ex-convicts.

The movie criticized the theories that women "want" rape and that rape is a "normal acting out of male aggression and female passivity."

Most of the convicted rapists in the film said that dominance was their main motivation.

"It wasn't the sex; it was the domination" and "To conquer is a conquest" were common statements.

Wiemann also described the medical examination a rape victim encounters for the court proceedings, a process which she says discourages many victims from pressing charges.

Fibers, soil and pubic hair are collected from the genital area and kept in a "rape kit," a cardboard box with several envelopes for the samples. Tests of all body fluids are also made; any evidence of penetration is recorded or collected.

Wiemann also discussed Rape Trauma Syndrome, a period of readjustment for the victim in which support from friends is extremely important.

She said the victim often feels guilty about the rape and needs to be reassured "that whatever she did, it got her through the situation alive."

Wiemann concluded the session on a positive note.

"I hope it's helpful, and I hope you don't ever need it."

The third session, to be held Thursday evening from 7-9 p.m. in 242 Gilbert Hall, will cover incest and child sexual abuse.

Women plan to 'take back the night'

An unspoken curfew in this country keeps more than half the nation's population locked up after dark, according to members of the Rape Crisis Network. Women fear nighttime because 60 percent of all rapes occur during these hours.

Saturday, women from all parts of the state will protest the curfew and march to "take back the night."

The "Take Back The Night" movement began in San Francisco in 1978 to "protest all forms of violence against women," says Evelyn Anderton, co-planner of the march.

Anderton and 13 other organizers from the University and community plan to lead a march through two miles of what they consider to be Eugene's most dangerous areas. Similar movements are planned in Salem and Roseburg.

"We want women to be able to go out at night safely for once without male protection," Anderton says.

Marcia Kraus of the Campus Women's Referral and Resource Center says the highest rape incidence occurs in the University area.

"People think that rape is confined to sleazy perverts in bushes. They think that college kids never rape or get raped," she says.

Gail Wiemann of the Rape Crisis Network agrees that the campus is a dangerous place for women at night.

"Students feel comfortable with students, but most rapes are Oregon Daily Emerald

'acquaintance rapes,' and there are more rapists under 20 than ever before," Wiemann says.

Living in a society in which one out of three women is raped sometimes causes women to "block out fear in day-to-day life," Anderton says. Instead, they choose to live with the violence and the unofficial curfew.

Workshops sponsored by the Rape Crisis Network and the campus YWCA are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at Harris Hall.

Workshops will deal with rape

prevention, pornography, violence and sexual harassment. Other workshops include a self-defense demonstration, a discussion of feminist erotica and a men's panel on violence against women.

Men are invited to the workshops but are asked not to march.

A rally begins at 7:30 p.m. at Harris Hall. The march follows, winding its way through the downtown area, the University area and back to the hall.

For more information, call 344-5273 or 485-6746.

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