

House Committee treads on meeting law

The plot thickens in the tale of the strange antics of the EMU Board House Committee.

When five members of the EMU Board met Sunday night at an apartment on Alder and 18th Avenue, they at least violated the intent and spirit of Oregon's open meetings law.

But more than that, those people deprived students of the chance to be involved in, and informed about, the decision-making process. That is reprehensible.

The open meetings laws were set up to prevent politicians and other public figures from operating behind closed doors.

The Board members called an "informal meeting...to discuss OSPIRG and Footnotes." The memo calling for the meeting was addressed to five of the board members and "anyone else who's interested." The memo announcing the meeting was posted in a conveniently inconspicuous spot in Suite 4 only a few days prior.

What occurred at this meeting is important in the legal sense of the open meetings law, but only if someone cares to pursue it legally.

We feel the most important aspect is not the legality, but rather the intention of some Board members to conduct public business while hindering public involvement.

Now here's the bizarre plot twist.

Two University students, directly involved in the OSPIRG/Footnotes issue, wanted to attend the meeting but were detained by a strange charade.

The students' tale unfolds when one student arrived at the prescribed meeting place, EMU Board Chair Dan Cohen's apartment, at 7 p.m. Cohen was not home. Cohen's roommate, while toying with flour on a mirror, assured them he would be back soon. After it appeared Cohen was not going to return the first student left.

He met the second student outside. Cohen's roommate then went outside and told them Cohen had called and would be back in 10 minutes. They returned to the apartment and waited and waited. Cohen never showed — and one of the two students says the roommate finally admitted the meeting place had been changed and the charade planned.

Cohen, according to one of the students, later said he asked his roommate to keep the two from the meeting.

One of the students, who was sidetracked at Cohen's apartment, is a member of the University's OSPIRG branch. The other is a member of the ASUO.

"I simply did not see why I had to have them there," Cohen says.

We simply do not see why Cohen and the rest of the Board members at the meeting wanted to keep them away.

We also wonder about the invitations to this "informal meeting." According to Frank Geltner, assistant program director, the names of those invited to the meeting resembled the information-gathering subcommittee that the House Committee would be likely to appoint.

We're also curious as to why the Board members had to take up this discussion in relative privacy? Several Board members said they discussed nothing they cared to debate with outside parties and arrived at no policy decisions. If that's the case, why the meeting, why the charade to keep the two students away?

One thing is clear from all this — the House Committee members are really in the dark on how to conduct a committee under proper procedures. They may have wanted the meeting closed because of their lack of knowledge of the situation and embarrassment. None even seemed familiar with a standard EMU lease prior to the meeting. They weren't familiar with state statutes regarding leasing procedures. Nor were they adequately prepared to prioritize group requests for space.

This makes us question their competency.

It's also possible that they wanted to direct themselves to exploring policy options regarding the allocation of EMU space without stumbling upon other issues in the process.

But none of these are legitimate reasons. None of these should preclude student involvement. And none of the board members present at that meeting Sunday should feel justified in meeting together under such circumstances.

Stay tuned, the denouement of this curious potboiler isn't even close.



letters

Stalemate

Let me add another question to Guido Palandris' list: Have the U.S. Marines Corps, by invading Grenada, finally attacked a sufficiently docile and defenseless population?

In the absence of any truthful news we can hope, despite the odds, that Grenadians will stalemate the invasion. And we can be sure, in the long run, that Grenada will win against U.S. "diplomacy."

Doug Baker
graduate

O Wilderness

With so many powerful headlines competing for our attention these days, otherwise important issues are losing our sights. But for those who support wilderness, the moment of truth is now.

Some of Oregon's most scenic lands are now on the line. The actions of Sen. Mark Hatfield in watering down wilderness legislation will serve as a double-edged sword — protecting many important areas, but opening many other to irreversible damage. The compromise is barely worth it.

The Oregon Forest Wilderness Bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives with overwhelming support. The bill adds 1.2 million acres to Oregon's designated wilderness lands, bringing the total to just over 4 million acres, or about 7 percent of our total forested lands.

But Hatfield's Senate version protects only some of the most endangered areas. Important areas which may be lost include the proposed Hardesty Mountain, Middle Santiam and North Kalmiopsis wilderness areas. If Hatfield's watered-down version passes, these areas could immediately be released for logging, removing forever the qualities which typify them as wilderness.

As a politician dedicated to serving his constituency, Hatfield — like his colleague Sen. Bob Packwood — bases his voting on the desires of his public. But first we have to let them know what we want. Those who feel the importance of protecting these last remaining wild areas need to write a letter to Hatfield and Packwood. Demand that all the lands included in the House version of the Oregon Forest Wilderness Act be included in the Senate version at the bare minimum. Any lesser version should be rejected for the dangerous loss to logging that will occur.

When issues seem to get farther from our control, we need to take out some of our most basic tools of democracy. Use the tools before us. Write a couple of letters supporting more wilderness. The future will thank you.

Marc Smiley
Eugene

Blinded by...

The rhetoric about Communist subversion exporting revolution and evil all over the world; about how sneaky, despicable and cowardly terrorists are; and how brave and righteous we always are, is designed to blind us to the most basic elemental facts about the human situation today. If we allow ourselves to be hypnotized by it we'll never understand what is going on, and can only contribute to further confusion, disorder and repression.

It completely sets aside and ignores the real causes of revolution and terrorism — the years of grinding poverty, hunger, sickness, hopelessness, injustice and bleakness that is the lot of at least half of humanity — the lack of any opportunity for education or self-fulfillment; the spectacle of the best lands held by wealthy landowners and huge agribusiness firms and devoted to cash crops for export — completely irrelevant to the needs of the local population — the denial of opportunity to become self-sufficient; the spectacle of great and increasing wealth for a few in a sea of worsening poverty for the many.

Now that the United States has evolved from an exploited British colony to the most wealthy and powerful nation on earth — chief beneficiary of the extraction of resources at rip-off prices from all over the world — cheap oil, cheap minerals, cheap cotton, cheap coffee and tea, cheap sugar, cheap labor — revolution or any change that might upset this appellation, has changed from the most glorious thing in history, when we did it, to the machination of the devil — the expansion of the evil

empire. Revolutionists are no longer heroes but cowardly sneaking pariahs skulking in the dark corners of the world seeking to extinguish the light of civilization.

You can't export revolution to peoples who feel they have a chance and are being treated with respect and fairness. Revolutionists and terrorists are people who have been driven up the wall to the point that they are willing to do anything — sane or insane — to be heard and to change their situation. Containing terrorism with force is not enough — and by itself is self-defeating.

Understanding the causes of the desperation which drove these people up the wall, and working for changes that will allow them the opportunity to become self-sufficient self-respecting members of the world community is the only path to any real solution.

Bayard McConaughy
biology

'Queer/Christian'

I do not see why there needs to be an issue over closing the doors of a Christian church to homosexual worship as the matter is relatively straightforward.

The Bible states, (Lev.19:2) "...ye shall be holy: for I the lord your God am holy." Jesus Christ was a man who kept that commandment, so therefore to be his follower one would need likewise to be holy.

The homosexuals believe they should be perverted when they discover this perversion in their bodies. This is the opposite viewpoint of a Christian, who believes he must be holy since he finds no perversion in God.

The homosexual may counter that it was God who gave him his body. Yet, the Christian replies by stating his belief in original innocence followed by the fall of man, on account of which, we have inherited a sinful nature, which is what Christ came to redeem us from.

Therefore a "queer Christian" is a self-contradiction.

Please accept my use of multiple terms here to designate the same thing where the more common term has multiple uses which could cause confusion. Christians are not supposed to be perverted gay — faggots, but happy and gay — joyous, on account of what God has done for us.

If a homosexual lets Christ deliver him from it, he may worship with joy among us Christians. In fact, he might be happier than the rest of us.

Earl Gosnell
Eugene

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