

anything as bad as this. But still I give (Oregonians) the credit that they have average, mediocre minds, same as in the world," Ma Anand Sheela says.

She compared the situation in Oregon to boiling milk. "You boil Oregon, you get bigotry on the surface."

There is a possibility for change, she says, although she cited an Amnesty International study calling Wasco County the most bigoted county in the world.

"If they are intelligent, I expect change very soon. If they are not intelligent, I don't expect change for eternity," she says.

The 35-year-old secretary's fiery words and outlandish remarks have prompted national curiosity and local criticism. On ABC's Nightline, host Ted Koppel turned off her microphone because she wouldn't stop haranguing and interrupting her fellow guest, state Rep. Wayne Fawbush, D-Hood River.

And yet she claims the media consistently misrepresent her because of their lack of understanding.

"They come here for about two hours and think they're experts on Rajneeshees. When someone comes with that kind of fallacy, you know they're going to misrepresent," Ma Anand Sheela says.

She has known Rajneesh since she was 17, and though she has had two husbands, she describes him as her "number-one lover."

"He's my lover — that has nothing to do with genitals, you understand. But I think that gives him a much better position than God. A God I can even curse — 'God damn it!' — But I can't say 'God damn it, Bhagwan!' It doesn't rhyme," Sheela says.

Ma Anand Sheela, who was a fine arts student at New Jersey's Montclair College, describes herself as a housewife.

"I was a housewife. I still am a housewife, just my household has increased," says Ma Anand Sheela, who insists on commune members calling her "Mom."

The innovative changes in lifestyle that are part of Rajneeshism will have to affect those around it, she says.

"Whether you want it or not, you do get affected by the greatness of the flower, and I have a feeling that (Oregonians) will be affected," she says.

She thinks the antagonism between Rajneeshees and Oregonians stems in part from jealousy.

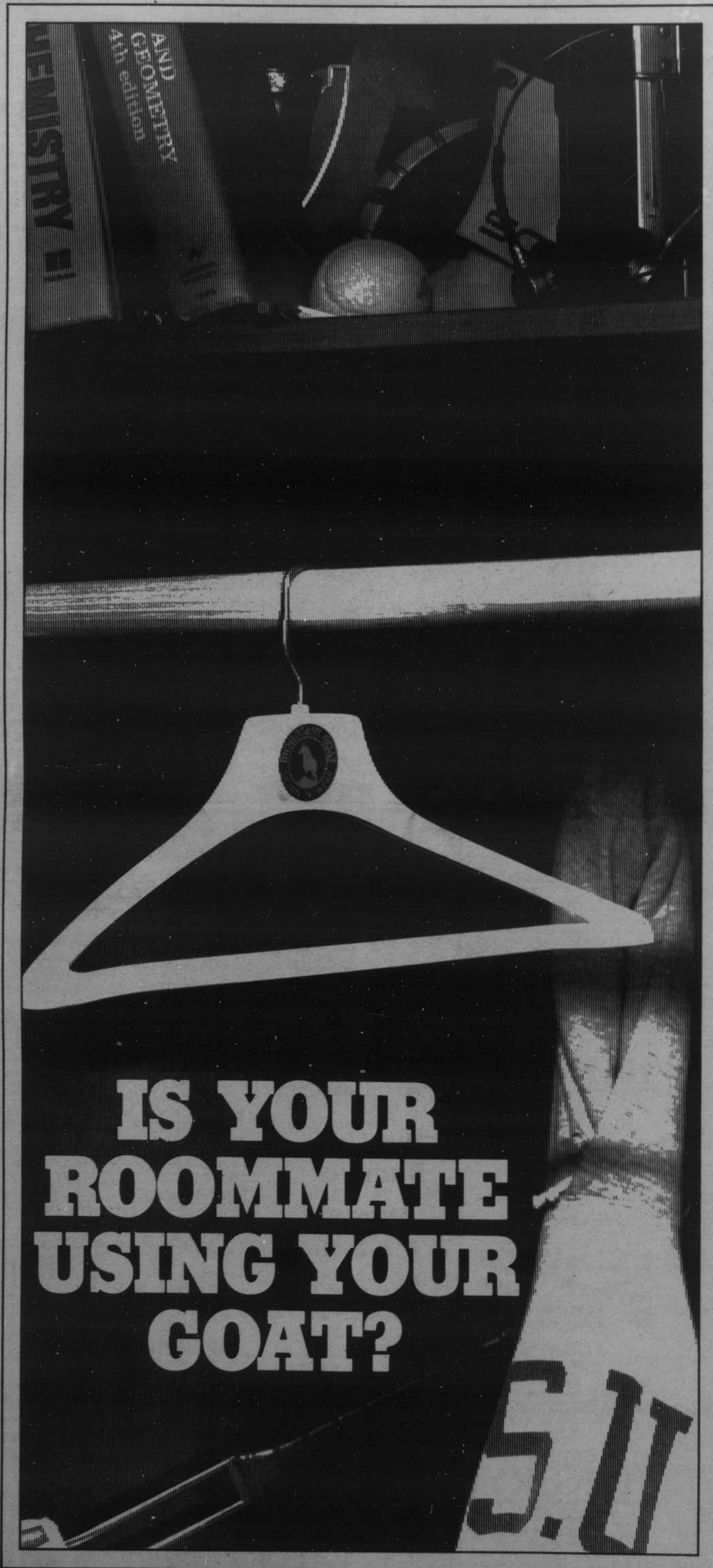
"All their lives, they've lived miserable in every aspect. They've lived with nagging wives and nagging children. Then they get jealous, and they try to knock it," she says.

But although there are problems, Ma Anand Sheela doesn't regret choosing the land that she did to establish the commune.

"I love this land. It's just this land's bad fortune that it happened to be in Oregon," she says.

For all the flamboyance of the Rajneeshees, Ma Anand Sheela says their only desire is to live in peace.

"Our purpose is for all Rajneesh lovers to live together in harmony, just being here and enjoying ourselves 100 percent."



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