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ASUO responds to insurance complaints
See Page 2

Photo by Michael Wilhelm

Pat and Willie Knaus with their two children Joby, 4, and Jessica, six months, both adopted.

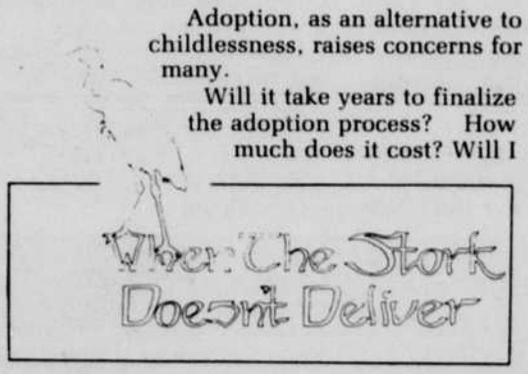
Adoption helps childless couples

By Alicia Gano
Of the Emerald

Editor's note: *This is the third in a three-part series that will examine the options available to those people unable to have children by choice or for medical or legal reasons. This story will examine open and closed adoptions and the problems associated with the adoption process.*

Adoption, as an alternative to childlessness, raises concerns for many.

Will it take years to finalize the adoption process? How much does it cost? Will I get an infant or an older child? Are only minority children available?



Adoptions are available from nine licensed private agencies within Oregon and through the Children's Services Division (CSD), said Fred Stock, adoption services manager for the state of Oregon. Stock cited a 90-day turn-around time to place a legally free child through CSD, but a child 5 years or older may take up to six months to place. Younger children are easier, Stock said.

To qualify for adoption, a family must show the ability to provide a loving and stable home where a child is truly wanted. Home studies are conducted to establish the eligibility of a family, Stock said.

The average wait for a child from CSD ranges from a couple of months to a year. Administrative costs to CSD average $3,370 while the costs to the adoptive parents is nothing, Stock said.

Turn to Adoption, Page 4

Officials meeting angers opponent

By Will Holbert
Of the Emerald

A Eugene man says he was forcibly ejected from a "secret" meeting last month when state and local officials met with Gov. Neil Goldschmidt to discuss the Riverfront Research Park.

Michael Gannon, an opponent of the Riverfront project, said the meeting was held on Sunday, Jan. 25, it was not announced, and citizens such as Gannon who showed up were not allowed to stay.

Gannon said he gained entrance to the meeting in the boardroom of the Eugene Hilton, but Eugene Mayor Brian Obie and Eugene City Manager Mike Gleason threw him out.

Officials at the meeting repeatedly asked Gannon to leave, which culminated in Obie and Gleason taking him by the arms and forcefully escorting him out the door, Gannon said.

"I was Obie-handled," Gannon said.

No one touched Gannon and he left on his own, Gleason said. Gannon spoke to the governor for 15 minutes, protesting the secrecy of the meeting, Gleason said.

"Had he sat down and been polite, he would have been allowed to stay," Gleason said.

But Gannon continued "frothing at the mouth," Gleason said. Gannon was "very rude."

Gannon said he thinks the meeting was a session of political deal making. Gannon believes Goldschmidt gave his approval of the Riverfront project in return for local legislators' approval of other, unrelated projects around the state.

Gannon and others are also suspicious of the secrecy surrounding the meeting. According to Gannon, some members of the Eugene City Council didn't even know about the meeting.

The secrecy was "so people wouldn't know what was on the table to negotiate," Gannon said.

The meeting was held to set an agenda for a public meeting

Turn to Meeting, Page 5

Mediation Program gets $8,583 budget approved

By Cami Swanson
Of the Emerald

The newly created University Mediation Program received unanimous approval for its budget at the Incidental Fee Committee hearing on Tuesday.

The Mediation Program is a pilot program designed to be an arena where students can confront other students or the University administration and work out problems.

IFC members were divided on who should fund the new program. The program will receive half its total budget from the IFC and half from the University.

Sheila Hale, speaking on behalf of the program, stressed the importance of having both sources of funding if the program is to maintain neutrality.

"You have to be neutral to be credible, and who pays your salary affects your credibility a great deal," she said.

ASUO President Steve Nelson, also in support of the program, agreed "co-funding" of the program was necessary so it is not merely an employee of the administration or of the students, but a combination of both elements.

IFC member Ron Munion abstained from the initial vote on the program's goals. "It disturbs me that students should have to pay for something that the administration should provide," Munion said.

Other IFC members unanimously approved the programs goals, but there was some debate about which IFC account would provide funds for the mediation program.

Several members recommended taking money from the IFC's surplus account, but committee member Bob Baldwin objected, saying he was concerned about using the present year's IFC surplus account to fund a program in a trial stage.

The IFC agreed to fund the program through its regular budget and, at the request of committee chairwoman Jodie Mooney, the IFC will attach a note saying the pilot program must prove successful before the Mediation Program receives the funds. The Mediation Program's requested budget of $8,583 was unanimously approved by the committee.

The IFC also approved the $536 budget for the International Studies Association, a 10.5 percent increase in funding from the prior year.

The ISA will use the added money to pay University and visiting professors to speak on a bi-weekly basis for the program.

In other funding matters, the IFC agreed to transfer $138 dollars from the ASUO's surplus fund to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance to cover past-due bills of Gay Pride Week.

Work-study program proposed

The state would pay part of some students' salaries under a bill introduced in the Oregon House of Representatives on Tuesday.

The bill is sponsored by Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-West Linn.

House Bill 2696 would authorize the State Scholarship Commission to spend $3,064,532 biennally to run the program. About 2,100 college students could earn up to $1,200 annually in public- and private-sector jobs. The state would reimburse the employers for up to 60 percent of that amount.

"It fits in perfectly, I think, with Gov. (Neil) Goldschmidt's Oregon Comeback plan," Hooley said. "It's a partnership between the public and private sectors."

Colleges would place students in jobs related to the students' prospective careers. "It allows students to have some opportunities for career exploration as well as experience in the field, and it pays their tuition," Hooley said.

Each institution also would have the option of granting students credit in addition to wages for time spent on the job, Hooley said.

The program would provide a much-needed alternative to loans, Hooley said. "I've been terribly concerned about the amount of loans students are taking out," she said.

Hooley will ask the Legislature to take the $1 million Goldschmidt has proposed for the merit-based aid program and an additional $1 million out of the general higher education budget to pay for the program, she said.