

Editorial

Discrimination law a positive beginning

The Lane County Board of Commissioners started to build the foundation for greater civil rights Wednesday when it passed a law prohibiting discrimination in public places. The law comes in a retaliation to the Noti pub incident still under investigation.

John Masepohl, the owner of the Noti tavern, had placed signs in his pub saying "No Niggers" and had several derogatory displays. But because state laws regarding discrimination are civil, not criminal, he may receive a light punishment.

The new law makes discrimination a criminal offense and carries a \$1,000 fine and a 30-day jail sentence. It also clearly defines public places to include restaurants and taverns. Commissioner Jerry Rust also has proposed an ordinance making people who discriminate liable for their actions.

This action will help prevent extreme examples such as the Noti pub from happening, but the enforcement of the law may be difficult — especially with more subtle forms of discrimination. Not every case will be as clear-cut as the Noti incident.

Some establishments currently have signs saying "we reserve the right to refuse service to anyone." According to the law, these signs will have to be removed because they express the potential to discriminate.

The Lane County Board took a bold and decisive step when it decided to revise this law. It reinforces the 14th amendment guaranteeing our civil rights. But more importantly, it takes a needed step toward solving the more discrete institutional racism.

Although the law is not foolproof, it makes a statement to people in Lane County that racism is a problem and it will not be tolerated.

Immunity for North granted too soon

Lt. Col. Oliver North was granted limited immunity by the congressional committees investigating the Iran-Contra affair Thursday. While this decision may provide the hearings with more detailed information, the decision came much too soon.

North already has been implicated as the ringleader of the contra fund raising by several witnesses. Currently Albert Hakim, a former Iranian who supposedly worked with North and Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, is testifying that a large bank account was set up for North's family in case of his death.

The evidence clearly shows North played a major role in this scandal. By granting him some form of immunity, the congressional committees may give up the opportunity to punish him.

There are other figures in this affair and other methods of obtaining the information. The committees should have completed all the testimony before deciding if immunity was necessary. This hasty judgement could prove to be costly.



Letters

Life poisoning

I wish to respond to Glen Sacks' letter regarding the recent teachers' strike and the violence against people who cross picket lines (ODE, May 29). I find his suggestions to be on the same moral level as yelling "fire" in a crowded building for fun.

Whatever Mr. Sacks' motivation might be, he is feeding with fresh rhetoric an emotionally volatile situation. He is pouring poison into the minds of people already sick and wounded with bitterness and hatred.

Unions in our country's past have fought courageously against injustice and indifference. I applaud their courage and acknowledge that their cause has often been a noble one.

In many cases, however, their methods of dealing with injustice and brutality have, themselves, been violent and brutal and contributed to the suffering and misery of those involved rather than easing them.

Employers can be greedy and selfish. They are not, however, alone in these qualities: we all

share in them. Such a simplistic, shallow view of the world as Mr. Sacks presents tends to be used to manipulate issues and emotions.

It promotes violence and a "me first" attitude, as well as alienation between people who must live and work near each other.

I call on Mr. Sacks to rethink his position or to keep his views to himself. I would also encourage people to seek understanding and reconciliation, and to put the anger, hatred and bitterness, with their life-poisoning effects, in the past.

William Moore
Music

AIDS control

Fact: Health care workers are being told to wear gloves, protective glasses and surgical masks when working around AIDS patients or when handling blood products.

Fact: Some people are saying that wearing a thin little rubber during sex will protect you from AIDS if you have sex with a carrier.

Okay, this makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

Michael Cross
Graduate
Political science, history

Hitler lesson

In response to Aaron Schutz' letter, ODE, June 2.

Sorry, Mr. Schutz, I should have been more specific: Hitler was the leader of the National Socialist German Worker's Party.

So what difference does this make anyway? Hitler's Germany was not democratic or a free enterprise nation. All power was ultimately centralized in the government.

It was essentially a command economy. Democratic principles were despised by Hitler. He also abolished freedom of religion, press, speech, and he

outlawed other political parties. Sound like any other nations you're familiar with today?

Hitler was a strange person. He would attack Marxism one day and later claim his movement got many of its ideas from Marxism.

Hitler was many things — including the leader of the National Socialist movement. Come to think about it, his brutal system had many of the characteristics of quite a few communist societies — more similarities than differences, that's for sure.

Lori Parkman
Elmira

Not genetics

Laura Desertrain's recent letter (ODE, May 26) was not at all convincing that homosexuals become the way they are because of hormones or genes.

The letter first claimed science isn't "sophisticated" enough to prove it's biological. Then a theory was presented, not backed by a shred of research, but sounding as if it's a well established (etched in stone) fact, as to how homosexuals are genetically produced.

That's rather fascinating. There have been many studies to determine if sexual attraction to the same sex could be due to genetics or hormones, like FSH, ICSH, testosterone, estradiol, prolactin, estrogen, etc.

There doesn't appear to be a link between these factors and non-heterosexual lifestyles.

For further information check the New England Journal of Medicine, 1973, p. 1236; Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, 1974, p. 796; and American Journal of Psychiatry, 1975, p. 288 and AJP, 1977, p. 571.

No homosexual baby has ever been born. If homosexuality develops, it has to do with other influences. Nature doesn't deserve the blame!

Gina Norens
Eugene

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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