

Editorial

Paraphernalia ban the wrong move

Eugene Mayor Brian Obie's proposed ordinance to ban the sale of paraphernalia should be denied Wednesday by the City Council because it would not only violate consumers' sovereignty, but also would have little impact on the consumption of illegal drugs in Eugene.

The paraphernalia City Hall seeks to ban includes pipes, bongs and other smoking utensils, which can be used for tobacco in addition to marijuana. Also included are such items as grow lights and irrigation systems, which also have legal applications.

With regard to the mayor's speech last Tuesday, it is evident he doesn't seek to abate drug abuse but to create an image that Eugene is not "soft on drugs."

The Register-Guard quoted Obie as saying, "To allow (the sale of paraphernalia) to continue makes a statement to the world that this is a community that is soft on drugs. I want to make the statement in the other direction."

In other words, Obie wants to boost Eugene's image at the expense of imposing potentially unconstitutional consumer limitations.

Les Kellow, public service officer in the City Manager's office, said he thinks Obie wants to "change the liberal image" of Eugene. But by trying to enact an ordinance to change the image of Eugene rather than abate drug abuse, Obie is imposing the arbitrary wishes of government on the Eugene populace.

The mayor's office and police department contend allowing commercial retailers to sell paraphernalia in "prominent locations" sends the wrong message to Eugene's youth.

Educational programs tell youth to say "no" to drugs, yet people can buy equipment to use drugs at retail outlets. This sends a "mixed message" to youth, said police Sgt. Tim McCarthy, Department of Public Safety community affairs director.

Existing law does that. It prohibits the sale of paraphernalia to those less than 18.

However, it is an adult's right to decide what products to buy, and the government has no place making such decisions for consumers.

Even if the ordinance was proposed to abate drug abuse in Eugene — which apparently it is not — it would have little effect on the consumption of drugs.

McCarthy claims the ordinance could have a positive impact on drug abuse, though he acknowledges it would not be a dramatic one.

In contrast, Dave Fidanque, Oregon American Civil Liberties Union associate director, maintains the existence of headshops have "zero" effect on methamphetamine consumption, despite acknowledging Eugene is a haven for methamphetamine users. "The ordinance is a waste of time."

Fidanque added ordinances enacted elsewhere have two problems: 1) they often are unconstitutional because of being vague or too broad; and 2) they are difficult to enforce. This second problem illustrates how crime-fighting resources might be misallocated if the ordinance is enacted — redirecting resources from fighting methamphetamine producers to stopping retailers from selling pipes.

Obie instead should center his efforts on substantive measures to eradicate the availability of drugs before taking on the most visible aspect of drug abuse.

MUTINY ON THE BOEING



Letters

Notorious plot

Fellow students. Please, oh please, let us put aside all our differences concerning the Greeks, Olum's getting the boot, God (and/or gods), abortion, etc., and unite. For here we are about to present a much greater problem with deep social implications. So, listen my children and you shall hear of the famous quest of Gerard and Aaron.

Spies! Commie spies. Yes, they have infiltrated the nerve center of our country's defense complex, our campus. They're here.

No, now don't be paranoid. They are not everywhere. Them reds are smarter than that. Instead they have concentrated their thieving operation in just one place. Their message center, PLC. To even the untrained eye, much like our own, it is easy to see how they are sending our top secret information back to Mother Russia.

Only through painstaking observation have my colleague and I discovered the vast array of patterns, no doubt secret codes, that are so blatantly displayed nightly on the west facade of PLC.

They wish us to believe that

this seemingly random office light pattern is just that. However, we know that these coded patterns are being picked up by Russian submarines lurking off our coast. To date we have not been able to decipher their code, but never worry, never fret, our work isn't done yet.

What's it going to be then, eh? Are we going to let these pinko subversives drain America's brain through our beautiful campus? Just say 'NYET!'

Gerard Barry
Psychology
Aaron Cudek
Fine arts

Quantum leap

When will the University take the quantum leap into the 20th century with its registration procedures?

This may shock some, but there are other colleges and universities beyond the mighty shadow of Skinners Butte who have made such post-frontier discoveries as the U.S. Postal Service (mail-in registration) and the telephone (computerized phone registration with touch-tone phones). Some even have taken such futuristic steps as allowing students to pay for fees with credit cards!

As an undergraduate, I found the so-called arena scheduling system and waiting in line to pay fees to be something akin to a cross between a cattle stampede and the New York Stock Exchange.

Registering for graduate classes under this system was only irritating and inconvenient, with the added freedom of not worrying about classes being filled and being able to register late, after the crowds have subsided.

Now, as a Ph.D. candidate registering for my last few thesis credits while living outside of Eugene (yes, life does exist elsewhere), the process of either driving in from out of town to register or conning someone into doing it for me has become downright ridiculous.

Would the administration please do itself a great favor and trade in the quill and ink set for the silicon chip?

Ken Menell
Ph.D. candidate,
school psychology

Wisdom

Regarding Bert Tryba's letter urging today's contemporary scholars to dispel the notion that religion could hold any truth (ODE, Jan. 8) — Tryba asserts that those with faith in a God are trying to avoid the reality that there is no God.

I wonder if it isn't the other way around; perhaps people sharing Tryba's conviction that God is non-existent are attempting to avoid the reality that there IS a God. Accepting the idea of God would require admitting that we are creatures of finite understanding and intelligence. We would be inferior to a higher power.

How ridiculous in this age of glory in our seemingly unlimited technological and scientific capacity! "Let no man deceive himself, if any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God..." (1 Cor. 1:18). God's ways aren't our ways nor does He necessarily think the way we think.

"God has chosen the foolish things (simplicity of creationism perhaps?) of the World to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27). Unfortunately, we humans thrive on pride in ourselves and the freedom to set our own standards. A God who commanded obedience and honor would cramp our style — we'd rather deny His existence at all!

How well the apostle Paul describes our society in Romans 1:22, "Professing to be wise, they became fools..."

Lisa Valevich
Human services

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