

Editorial

AIDS hospice closes leaving bitter lesson

Carper House, a hospice for AIDS patients, closed a few weeks ago. The service provided support and care unavailable at other nursing homes for AIDS patients with little resources, but the organization ended up broke and unable to continue.

The closing of Carper House is a vivid — and unfortunate — example of how very present the spectre of AIDS is in the Eugene-Springfield area, and how overtaxed present efforts are in combatting the disease.

The closure is a vivid example because only one other low-cost support service remains in the county. Shanti of Oregon is a Eugene-based volunteer agency that, until recently, did not receive public funding. The organization currently serves 49 patients with one-on-one support; now it must assume Carper House's burden in addition to its own.

The closure is an unfortunate example because the Lane County Joint Social Service Fund Budget Committee chose to deny a \$12,000 Shanti request last month, after a May 19 public hearing in which city council members were made aware of the possible impact AIDS could have on the community, and how necessary public funds were.

On June 15, the Eugene City Council reversed its earlier decision, and granted \$5,000 to Shanti. Council members Cynthia Wooten and Debra Ehrman requested the donation.

"I'm not trying to be a bleeding heart here, but there are no other services for people who are dying," Wooten said afterwards. Mayor Brian Obie said that in the future, the budget committee would have to give more priority to AIDS programs.

It is fortunate that the City Council came around the second time, but there is not yet a happy ending to this story — like most AIDS stories. The loss of services such as Carper House will certainly continue to hinder the efforts of volunteers and hurt the lives of those with the disease.

New OSPIRG office will aid toxic reduction plan

While one important service is closing in Eugene, another one has just opened up.

The Oregon State Public Interest Research Group has opened a new campaign office at 1128 Alder St. The office will serve as the base for a staff of 40. OSPIRG workers are currently canvassing the region in support of proposed toxic use reduction legislation.

OSPIRG has correctly identified a growing environmental concern, the growing use of toxic chemicals in industry, and come up with an inventive measure to curtail this potentially deadly threat.

There is also an OSPIRG staff working in Portland, and sister public interest research groups in California, Massachusetts and New Jersey are working on similar toxic use legislation.

The job of an OSPIRG canvasser is hard, demanding work with long hours and little pay. It has tremendous personal rewards, but greater yet are the rewards for the community. If students get a chance to sign one of OSPIRG'S TUR Grams (a letter to state senators encouraging support for the toxic use reduction legislation), we strongly encourage signing it.

Lane County has, in the past, been receptive to OSPIRG campaigns, and we have high hopes for this endeavor as well.



Commentary

City's paraphernalia law will not end local drug problem — just local jobs

On May 9, the Eugene City Council unanimously approved an ordinance that regulates the sale of drug paraphernalia within the city. The ordinance is presently scheduled to take effect July 1.

Commentary by
Paul Dinberg

Clearly this represents nothing more than a blatant desecration of our U.S. Constitution, and it is nothing less than the council's failure to adequately deal with the drug problem in this city.

Just who will be hurt by this form of lawmaking? Members of the community have simply found their niche in Eugene, and are trying to capitalize on it. Is that not the American way?

Apparently, the drug market is not going to go away soon, at least not until the inherent problem is dealt with. Keep in mind that unlike the tobacco companies, these business owners are not the direct source of addictive health problems in this society. They supply the match, so to speak, not the "tobacco."

Furthermore, they do not possess the economic or political power that the tobacco companies possess to defend attacks on their livelihood. Personally, I think their current livelihood has been stolen outright. Who will be that person to purchase something from these businesses after July 1? This regulation can only

look at the situation.

To the addict, drugs are not the source of the problem. They are a solution, one of the only solutions that society is offering them. Alcoholism is an example of this thinking. So do we offer solutions to these wandering souls, or do we slam our doors in their face?

Clearly, the City Council has

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serve to strengthen the bond between the drug pusher (and upcoming paraphernalia pusher) and the drug user or the drug abuser. More for the black market, less for the community. Just why is the local economy suffering?

Though we need to deal directly with the problem, this can only be achieved if we redefine as a whole the way we

slammed the door. Just saying no to the offering of help is easy for the council members. Probably they have all scored a few brownie points among the community members, but they have avoided the real problem. This is a cop out.

This city need not fall into this current decline in rational thinking that our governments have been slaughtering us with. No one should be proud of decision making in the interest of only a few. And those who hop on the current administration's bandwagon cannot be credited with independent thinking.

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Possible commentaries may be submitted to the Emerald office, Suite 300 EMU.

Commentaries must be approximately 500 words and typed.

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