

# Symposium speakers focus on media problems

*Failure to use correct terminology highlights discussion on issues*

By Christopher Blair  
Emerald Reporter

The failure of the media to gather and use correct information and terminology, and the media's failure to focus on relevant issues were among the problems discussed by lawmakers and community organization members on Tuesday at the third session of the Oregon Daily Emerald's press symposium.

Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust, Eugene City Councilwoman Deborah Ehrman, American Civil Liberties Union Area Director Dave Fidanque and Oregon State Health Division representative Paula Radloff spoke to a small group of Emerald staff and University students on the topic "Community and the Media."

Sometimes antagonistic relations between government and members of the media are the fault of both institutions, Rust said. He then offered advice to

both in their dealings with one another.

Rust cautioned lawmakers against thinking "half-baked issues out loud," and advised them to avoid secrecy in their day to day business.

"If you're open, the press will be your best friend," he said. "You should operate as if everything you do can be reported."

"Journalists will make an error from time to time," Rust said, adding that reporters should thoroughly research stories before gathering information from sources, as well as pulling quotes out of context to make stories more exciting.

Ehrman agreed, and said reporters have a responsibility to cover even "boring" stories accurately and fairly.

The different news media are "always trying to scoop each other," Ehrman said, adding that pressure from reporters to



Photo by Scott Mahen

**Jerry Rust, Debora Ehrman, Dave Fidanque and Paula Radloff discussed media coverage problems on Wednesday night.**

gather information ahead of the competition can strain relations between groups and the media.

"Before a meeting we may not want to tell what our vote is," Ehrman said.

Fidanque, before joining the ACLU, was a reporter in radio and television, and drew upon his experience in both areas to give reporters advice in dealing with governmental and community groups.

"Never be afraid to ask a dumb question," Fidanque said. "Dumb questions are usually the smartest questions. You may be afraid to ask them, but lots of times the answer to a dumb question will be the lead in everyone else's story."

Eighty percent of all Oregonians have at least a basic understanding of the AIDS issue, Radloff said, and credited the media's information campaign for this positive statistic.

However, the media should be more sensitive to people with AIDS, and this includes using correct terminology, Radloff said.

"I'm really tired of hearing the word 'AIDS victim,'" Radloff said, adding that "people with AIDS" is better terminology. She also added "high risk groups" and "IV drug abusers" to the list of insensitive terminology.

High-risk "behavior" and "IV drug users" are more appropriate terms, Radloff said.

## Correction

An article on the Oregon Public Employees Union (OPEU) hardship leave program that appeared in the Emerald Oct. 12 said the program was not available to management service employees.

According to Willie Hart, of the human resources office at Oregon Hall, management service employees have a similar option, called donated leave.

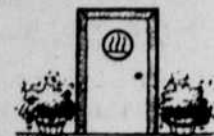
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An article on the amateur photographers seminar being hosted by the Eugene Shutterbug camera stores and sponsored by the Eastman Kodak Co., to be held Nov. 9, said the seminar would be free of charge.

According to Ray Patrick, manager of the Shutterbug store at 890 E. 13th Ave., there will be a \$10 fee for the three-hour seminar.

The Emerald regrets any confusion these errors may have caused.

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