

Inside

- Stadium stair-storming, Page 3
- Bowl hopes still alive, Page 8
- Cagers open new season, Page 10
- A split in volleyball, Page 12

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Rally mobilizes for women's right to abortion

About 200 turn up for counter-demonstration

By Hon Walker
Emerald Associate Editor

About 1,000 abortion rights supporters rallied in the EMU courtyard Sunday, then flooded sidewalks and clashed with political and philosophical opponents after a march to the downtown Federal Building.

The events were part of the national "Mobilize for Women's Lives" demonstrations. The main march occurred in Washington, D.C.; there were smaller rallies nationwide.

Local organizers said the events aimed to sustain attention on abortion rights, which has moved from a moral and legal issue to what many believe will be the chief political issue of 1990.

"In elections in every place from Seattle to New York City, it has been demonstrated that if any politician dares be out of step with the pro-choice movement, they're going to be out of office," said former city councilor Cindy Wooten during the rally at the University.

"We're here to say that we're going to be at the ballot boxes as never before," she said.

State attorney general and 1990 gubernatorial candidate Dave Frohnmyer stressed the legal and political limits of abortion legislation.

"The people of Oregon have already decided this issue. I've heard this issue argued on a moral plane, and I've seen very few minds changed in either direction."

"Let's let the law leave women alone, and let's leave the law alone," Frohnmyer said.

After the rally at the University, the group

marched down 13th Avenue to High Street. They proceeded to the Federal Building downtown, attracting attention of motorists and neighborhood residents on the way.

Police officers directed blocks of crawling traffic and chanting marchers. A Eugene Public Safety Department spokesperson said no arrests were made.

At the Federal Building waited a group of about 200 anti-abortion demonstrators who stood peacefully and sang as the energized crowd approached and began to circle the building.

Obscenities and hisses accompanied emotional debates that flared between some abortion rights supporters and counter-demonstrators.

One man rushed into the anti-abortion group and tore down a banner reading "Some Choice: Mom's Convenience/Baby's Life." A pile of Oregon Citizens Alliance's "Unmasking Planned Parenthood" newsletters was burned in front of the Federal Building as well.

Many of the anti-abortion demonstrators were members of OCA and Lane County for Life, said Philip Ramsdell, Lane County OCA director.

"What we're saying is, it's not a matter of choice; it's a matter of life and death," Ramsdell said. "We're not here to disrupt their protest; we're just here to make our point and tell people that there's another side to this issue."

National Abortion Rights Action League local coordinator Kitty Piercy said she was not discouraged at the presence of opposition.



Photo by Amy Appleby

Gayle Horwitz (right) listens as Sunday's abortion rights rally gets underway in the EMU Courtyard. The rally was part of a larger national showing.

Turn to Rally, Page 5

Should drugs be legalized?

Some say the "war on drugs" is unwinnable and that it's time to grant amnesty to the prisoners. But at what cost to society — and the rights of the individual?

By David Bates
Emerald Contributor

The federal government has declared war on Ben Bentley.

At least that's what he's been reading in the paper lately. Bentley (not his real name) makes a living selling marijuana. He owns about 60 plants. Naturally, he worries about becoming a casualty in the "war on drugs" and winding up in jail.

Andrew Bates is an assistant federal defender in Eugene who has suggested the government consider a new policy that would let people like Bentley relax: legalize drugs.

"What I want to have is an open discussion and not have people dismiss the alternative," Bates said. "I'm not necessarily advocating the legalization of drugs."

Few people do. According to a 1988 Gallup Poll, only 16 percent of Americans favor legalizing drugs. For politi-

cians whose primary desire is to satisfy their constituents, that minority is small enough to ignore.

Oregon's congressional delegation has received only a handful of letters advocating legalization. Marcia Ohlemiller, an aide on judicial matters for Sen. Bob Packwood, said although there have been some mentions in Congress of similarities between the "war on drugs" and Prohibition during the 1920s, the analogy usually is carried no further.

"The climate here on the whole drug issue is very much one of a sort of big emergency," Ohlemiller said.

Emergency or not, legalization is too unpopular for politicians to consider. "The atmosphere here is such that people are not likely to bring up legislation for legalization," Ohlemiller said.

But in the nation's media, a debate over the merits and problems of legalization is brewing. Although Bates is encouraged by that, he would like to see

Turn to Drugs, Page 6

Use among students common

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Associate Editor

While the societal battle over the legalization of now illicit drugs rages on, drug use among University students prevails outside the law.

A random sample of 1,271 University students in 1988 showed that 42 percent of the student had used marijuana in the past year. Also, 14 per-

cent had used psychedelics and 13 percent had used cocaine.

Unsurprisingly however, was that students reported alcohol had been the most frequently used drug within the year prior to the survey. Ninety-three percent of the respondents had consumed alcohol, with 80 percent of those using within the last month.

Other statistics from the 1988 drug

Turn to Students, Page 5



Photo by Martin Thiel