

OLCC help may be answer to problem

College students have been drinking alcohol and throwing loud parties since anyone can remember. It seems at this point most people have resigned themselves to the situation.

Most people, however, cannot resign themselves to the idea of partying students congregating in the hundreds and responding violently when police try to break it up.

This problem is worthy of concern, because the actions of a few individuals can change the community's view of all students.

Task forces have been created to come up with solutions to the problem. So far it doesn't look like what they're doing has been working.

One of the ideas has yet to be tried. The proposal was to station two Oregon State Liquor Control Commission officers on campus to run an education and intervention program for students. The officers would be housed in the EMU and would work with students, staff and administration to help prevent underage drinking and negative behavior related to alcohol.

Members of the University administration are supportive of the proposal. Not surprising, considering the situation they are in.

But they also are concerned that the OLCC officers do not run around just trying to bust students. The University expects OLCC to run a strong preventative educational program and to curtail excess drinking.

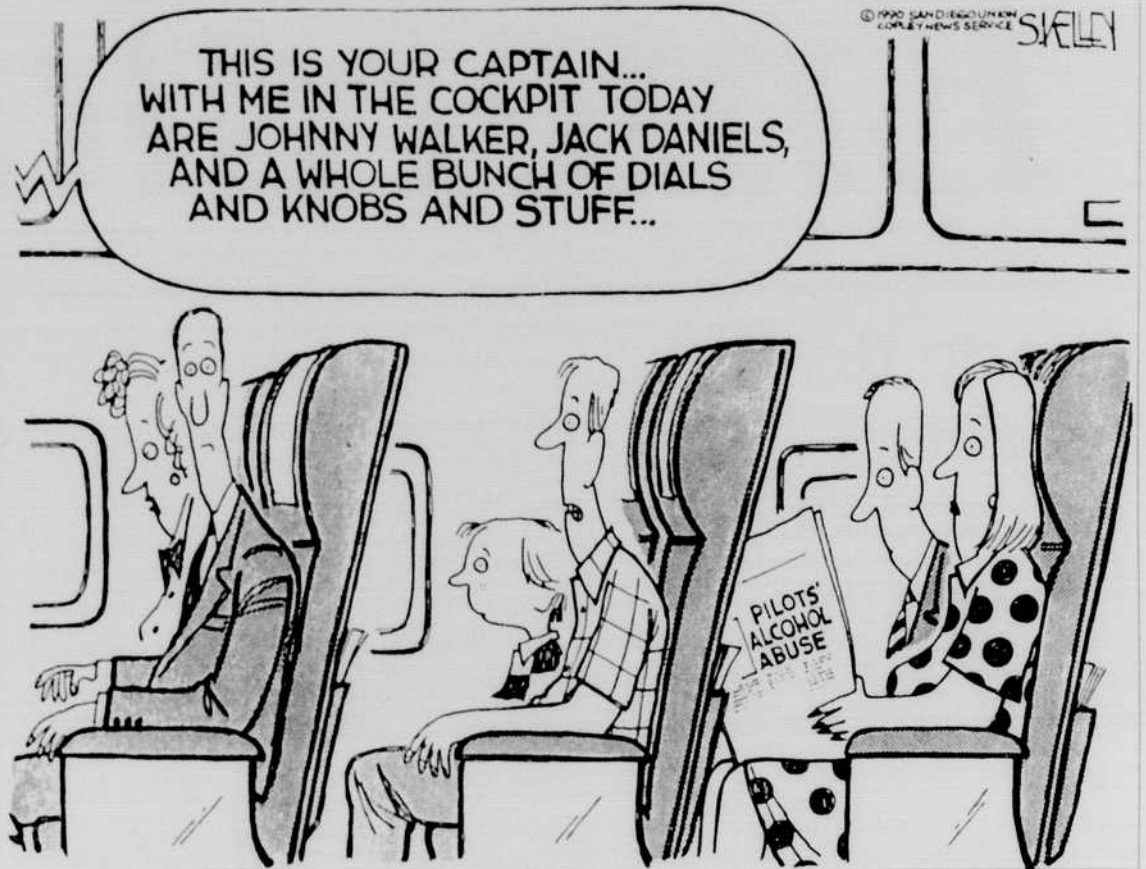
The University has offered to house the OLCC officers in the EMU free and to give them phone service. While this is a step in the right direction, it will not make the program happen.

The only offer of funding to date is from the state executive branch, which offered to pay 56 percent of the costs if the University, city and county governments would cover the rest of the costs.

Local governments claim they don't have the money, and we all know the University's funding problems. Many people look back to the state for further funding.

Perhaps the problem could be solved by everyone pitching in. If the University, the ASUO and city and county governments could each put up a portion of the funding, perhaps OLCC could pull it off. With the continued campus alcohol problems, the OLCC officers would help deter future confrontations.

If the program does get implemented, it is important that some provisions ensuring the educational direction of the program need to be installed. Because if at a future date the OLCC officers changed their primary focus from education and intervention to strict enforcement student support of the program would diminish at a rapid rate.



Schools should move to help gays, lesbians

Last week, a majority of Eugene School Board members appeared willing to expand the mission of the school district's task force on racial and gender issues so that it would also treat gay and lesbian concerns.

The school board considered the suggestion from Jim Clay, project director of Willamette AIDS Council's Youth Program, that the district's Community Advisory Committee on Educational Equity add gay and lesbian issues to the committee's agenda. The board decided at present not to go that far, but was willing to explore the issue in the future.

With the assumption — and hope — that its promise does not turn out to be an empty one, the school board should be commended for its decision; hesitancy and all.

Yes, the school board eventually should put in place a task force that will work to meet the needs of gay and lesbian high school students. Many lesbians and gay men describe their high school years as the unhappiest and loneliest times of their lives — a time spent in the closet because of the virulently homophobic environment found in the typical high school.

But no, the Community Advisory Com-

mittee on Educational Equity's basic mission should not have been expanded just yet. There are two reasons why.

First, had the committee's responsibilities been increased, it would probably have little idea of where to begin. The committee was created last December after a two-year study of the school district's racial and gender problems was completed. A similar study, to determine the wants and needs of Eugene's gay and lesbian youth, should be enacted before any committee can properly work to an end.

Also, any program seen as giving "validity" to homosexuality is sure to draw flak from more than a few community members.

Secondly, when the school district is ready to help gay and lesbian pupils, it should consider not enlarging the Community Advisory Committee on Educational Equity, but splitting it. The committee would best serve as three smaller committees.

Too many times, issues of sexism, racism and homophobia are lumped together in one catch-all category. It's encouraging to see the school district begin to consider homophobia as pressing a social concern as sexism or racism — but the issues are distinct, and they should be treated distinctly.

Letters

Just telling

Jon Knight asks, "Does Henry Goldstein actually believe that the 'poor' are better off today than they were 10 or 20 years ago?" (ODE, April 3)

My letter (ODE, April 2) did not address that question. Rather, it challenged Michael Parenti's assertion that the "poor are the fastest growing social group in America." It reported figures showing that the fraction of the population below the official poverty line was 12.8 percent in 1988, as opposed to 12.9 percent in 1980.

If those Census Bureau figures are correct, they clearly imply that "the poor" have not been increasing at a faster rate than the population as a whole — hence that Parenti's assertion was false.

Interestingly, the corresponding percentages were 30.2 percent in 1950, 22.2 percent in 1960, and 12.3 percent in 1970. The fraction of Americans with

incomes below the official poverty line thus fell sharply in the 1950s and in the 1960s — mostly before Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" and the civil rights movement got underway. Subsequent massive programs to help the poor thus appear to have been a costly flop.

In *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980*, Charles Murray explains what went wrong. He concludes that the new government's efforts to assist the poor destroyed many of the incentives that earlier existed for the poor to help themselves — hence the dismal results from the federal government's anti-poverty efforts.

Not asking this time; just telling it like it is ...

Henry Goldstein
Economics professor

What next?

As the 20th anniversary of the Jackson and Kent State

shootings approach, it's good to see the EPD assuming the proper attitude in recognizing of these historical events.

We find it comforting to know that there is a tight grasp of control over the menacing masses of riotous students. As we all know, so many people assembled in one place, having a good time, surely means no good! The fact that the EPD responded in riot gear to this spectacle of public debauchery illustrates their "non-biased" attitude toward University students.

Was the EPD truly reacting to Saturday night's activities, or was it trying to set a precedent for spring term? Does their reaction Saturday night mean that any large assembly of students poses such a threat to the well-being of Eugene that we can all look forward to future stand-offs with EPD?

If the University condones the use of tear gas to keep students under control — what next? Will we see the National

Guard "keeping the peace" at the Willamette Folkfest with tanks and helicopters?

Gary Rosenstein
Kelly Wyatt
Students

Acrid fumes

MIPs. No one wants one. It is indisputable that a few cops dressed in standard uniforms and armed with ticket books would have been more than sufficient to disperse any group of under-21 University students drinking and dancing to a band.

Instead, the police chose to make what I can only think of as a Show of Power by sneaking up behind the party and launching tear gas. Where were their megaphones? Many, including myself, were unaware of the order to disperse until the first acrid fumes wafted our way, along with a virtual stampede of people. The shoot-first-ask-questions-later attitude of these people was completely

uncalled for.

Of course the police are justified in trying to respond to a noise complaint. However, I would be willing to wager that had this complaint come from anywhere but the University area, they would not have shown up in Public Spectacle/Tiananmen Square regalia. By treating a typical Saturday night party like a riot, the EPD created a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If they had the intention of putting the fear of authority into the students, they failed. By handling the situation in this poor manner, the police department has effectively lost whatever respect it might have gained. And "overreaction" would be a gross understatement.

If the Eugene Police Department continues to make riots out of parties, they may make a war zone out of Eugene.

Lisa Ludwig
Student

Friday, April 6, 1990