

Panel seeks homeless solution

By June Russell
Emerald Reporter

Real solutions to the growing homeless problem need to be found and stereotyping needs to end, homeless panelists told listeners at an open mike forum at Harris Hall Thursday night.

Sponsored by Clergy and Laity Concerned, panelists addressed the need for both long term and immediate solutions to the lack of shelter facilities and shortage of low-income and affordable housing.

Panelist Sunny Harmon addressed the need for more low-income housing and resources for the homeless. One possible solution, Harmon said, is the Oregon Housing Fund Bill.

The bill would appropriate \$95 million to establish an emergency account and a hous-

ing development and guarantee account. The building of low-income housing and providing mortgage assistance are among the provisions of the bill.

The myth that people are homeless by choice and the need for the homeless to support each other were among the issues addressed by the panelists and speakers at the open mike.

Other concerns included the loss of a sense of community, the lack of ballot measures addressing the homeless problem, and the need for rent control and a designated camping area.

Carole Bruhl addressed the need to stop stereotyping the homeless, and get help to homeless children. According to census figures Eugene and Springfield host 2,400 home-

less children under the age of 18.

"The stereotyping of the homeless has got to end," she said. "For every one of those drug addicted, dirty and drunken homeless men, there's a group of children hiding in the bushes. We need to drag the non-believers kicking and screaming and show them this."

Vicki Peopinan and Amy Rose, both from the Family Shelter House in Eugene, stressed the need to replace stereotyping with reality.

"I keep hearing on T.V. and in the newspaper about the homeless and how we don't want this kind of people in our neighborhood," said Rose. "Well, last year I was your neighbor. I am one of you."

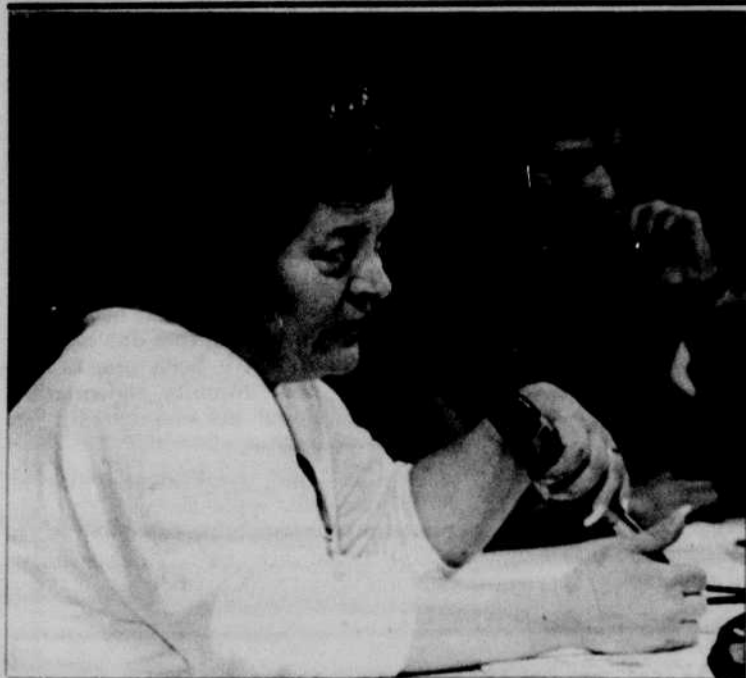
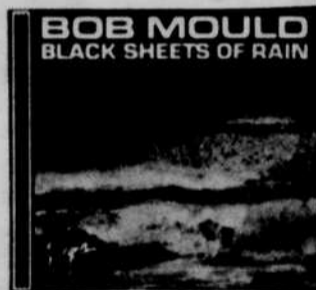
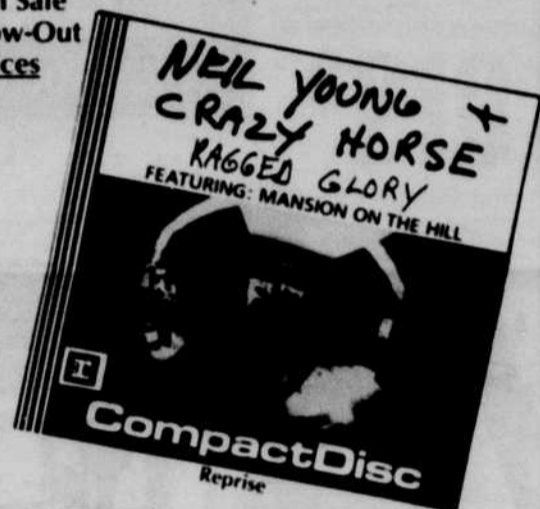
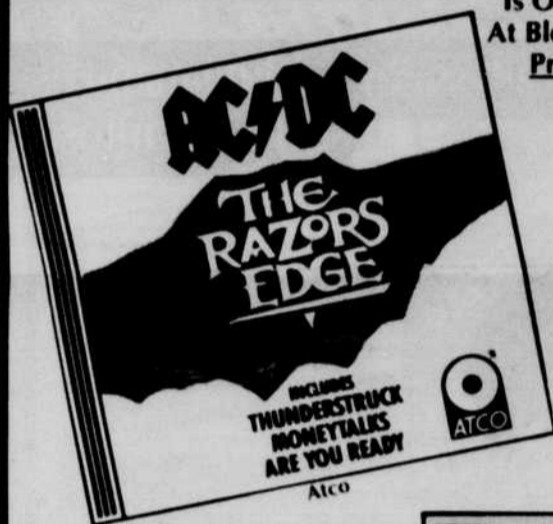


Photo by Andre Ranieri

Sunny Harmon (left) and Chuck McGee were two who spoke out on the homeless situation during a Thursday night panel discussion.

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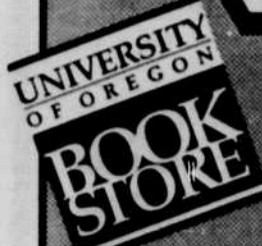
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