

BEANERY

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Ron Zahn, publisher of the *Lavender Network*, agreed with the aim of the agreement, but questioned the need for the disclaimer.

"If that's what it takes to get the *Lavender Network* distributed there, then that's OK," he said. "I think (the disclaimer) is pretty silly, personally. We don't publish pornography or erotica at all."

Controversy began brewing early last year when Tom Nelson, who managed the store at the time, told the *Lavender Network* to stop dropping off bundles at the Beanery.

"The *Lavender Network*, along with about 10 other periodicals, used to just come in and drop the bundles of newspapers on the floor, any place they chose to," Bright said. "To my knowledge, the *Lavender Network* never really had permission to distribute here."

The move fueled feelings of discrimination within the gay and lesbian community.

"Some people feel that because Allann Bros. doesn't carry an alternative, queer newspaper, that that is discrimination," Fisher said.

An article that ran in the October issue of the *Lavender Network* asked for input from the gay community about possible instances of discrimination by Allann Bros. restaurants against homosexuals.

In response to the article and after reviewing the editorials and advertisements printed in the *Lavender Network*, Allann Bros. officially banned the distribution of the magazine in its stores, Bright said.

"Something I don't understand is why the gay community would spend so much energy organizing a boycott and

'Gay community members, through our open forum, have expressed dissatisfaction with Allann Bros.'

— Ron Zahn

writing the articles when there had been no reports of homophobic behavior (by Allann Bros.)," Bright said. "On the comment cards that I get demanding that I carry the *Lavender Network*, not one of them complains about any kind of homophobic behavior from the management or the employees."

Zahn said *Lavender Network* readers did respond to the article with reports of discrimination.

"Gay community members, through our open forum, have expressed dissatisfaction with Allann Bros.," Zahn said.

What is clear is that the perception of discrimination against homosexuals by Allann Bros. does exist within the local gay community. Fisher sensed it when he moved to Eugene from San Francisco last October.

"I had heard that there was homophobia here (at the Beanery) when I first came around," Fisher said. "Coming from a group that has been oppressed, immediately you want to jump up and say, 'I'm not getting my rights.'"

After the *Lavender Network* ran another article about the

controversy in its February issue, the gay community was ready to boycott the Beanery.

Fisher moved to avert the boycott by organizing a once-a-week gathering of gay community members and supporters at the 5th Street Beanery. Called "Queer Night Out," the Wednesday night event normally attracts about 50 people.

"I thought maybe the problem was that (Bright) didn't know how many queer supportive people come to the Beanery," Fisher said. "The approach was to get the *Lavender Network* in here through something positive rather than through boycotting."

Fisher also used the weekly event to collect signatures from Beanery customers in support of their cause. Since the event began in February, the petition drive has collected more than 200 signatures.

Bright said he values his gay clientele, but needs to provide for the interests of the majority of his customers, who are heterosexual.

"One customer expressed very much that she was not coming in again," Bright said. "And every customer I lose concerns me."

Bright said distributing the *Lavender Network* with a disclaimer may satisfy the majority of his customers, but he still feels stung by the articles that were run in the magazine.

"The articles in the *Lavender Network*, I feel, have caused a lot of damage," Bright said. "They have caused a rift between Allann Bros. and the gay community. And to me, I feel that that's irreparable."

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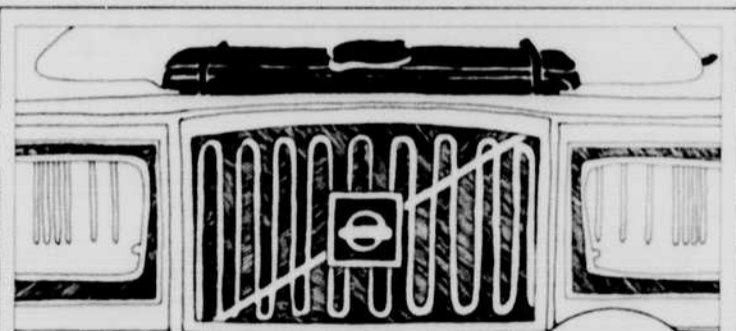
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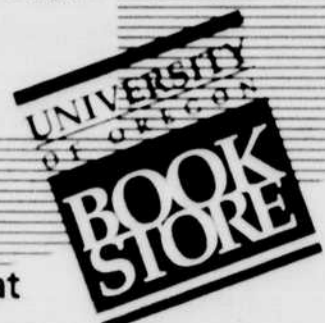
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