

Bills leaves post after busy year

□ Being ASUO president can be 'thankless,' but the departing Jennifer Bills was happy to do it

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Associate Editor

When Jennifer Bills was elected ASUO president April 25, 1991, her first comment was, "It's over! But God, it's just begun."

That turned out to be a bit of an understatement.

Sunday marks Bills' last day in office. During the year, she's dealt with everything from the attempted recall and subsequent resignation of her vice president, JoSonja Watson (whose legal troubles came to light late last year) to an ongoing push for a special legislative session in Salem.

She's also had budget disagreements with the Incidental Fee Committee and dealt with student outrage and violence over the Rodney King verdict, among other things.

But it's the kind of job where much time is spent "putting out small fires" and dealing with everyday details such as contract renegotiations with University service providers and work on every committee in the book.

"It's like being a parent," Bills said. "It's thankless and you don't get paid very well."

Dumbest thing anyone asked her while in office: "This guy walked into the ASUO once, and said to me, 'Are you really a lesbian?'"

Bills has had her share of detractors, but her administration has seen some successes as well.

She is most proud of two things — a new student insurance program that recognizes domestic partnerships and a negotiation, by Vice President Priscilla Warren,

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Making tracks

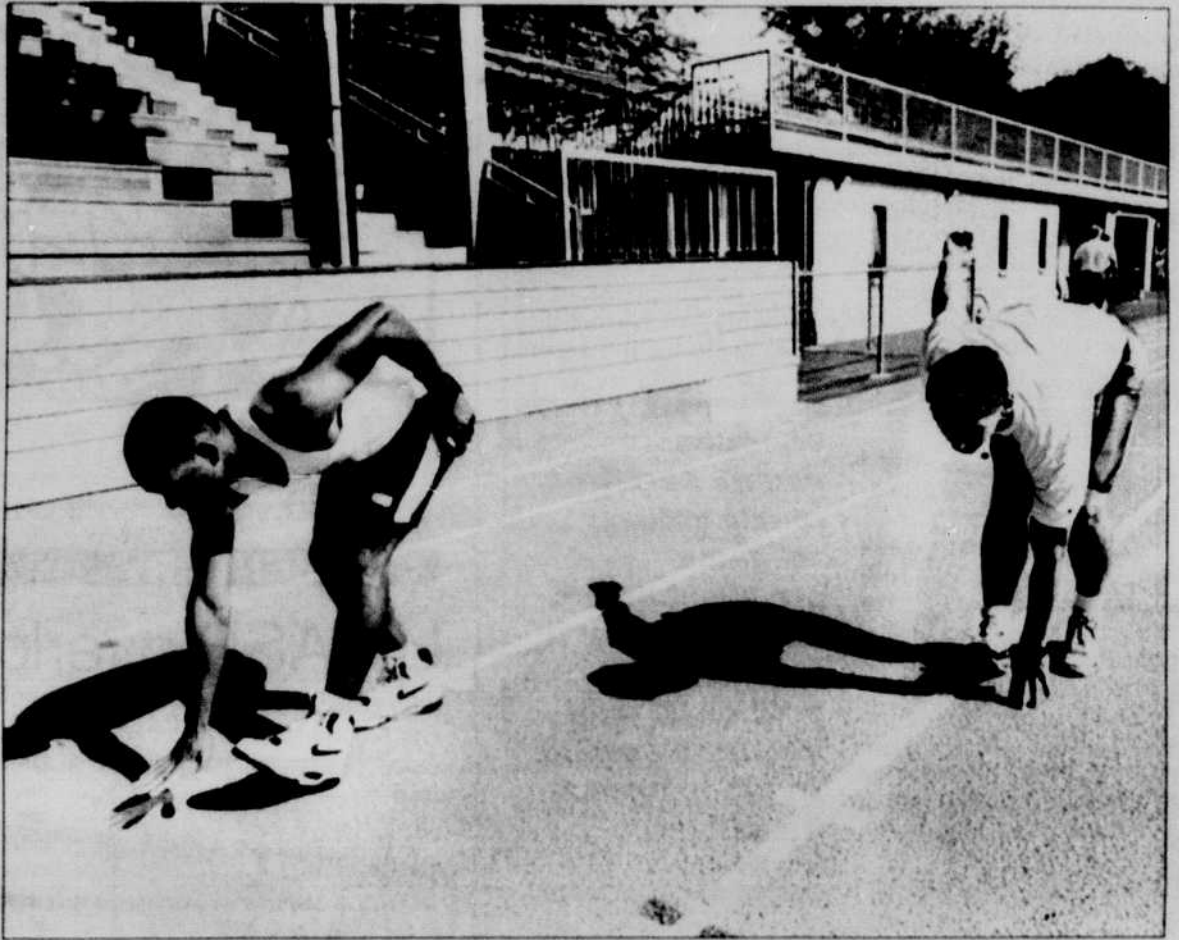


Photo by Jeff Paslay

Oregon sprint coach George Wallcott (left) warms up with Glenn Cole Thursday afternoon. The Pacific-10 Conference Track and Field Championships are this weekend at Hayward Field.

What happens after passage of anti-gay rights initiative?

□ 20-08 prompts fear, confusion and faces legal challenge

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Associate Editor

Shall charter be amended to prohibit City recognition of homosexuality, other behaviors as sexual orientation, and from promoting these behaviors? — Ballot Measure 20-08.

When a majority of Springfield voters decided Tuesday they wanted this initiative to be part of their city charter, it opened a floodgate of questions for everyone concerned about what it will mean and what happens next.

No one really knows what kind of impact the vaguely worded ordinance will have on the city.

Some are expressing fear about losing jobs, housing options and police protection, among other things. Meanwhile, Ralf Walters, a Springfield City Council member who supported the initiative, plans to move for an ordinance to protect jobs for gays and lesbians at the next meeting.

And the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is organizing a team of lawyers to challenge the initiative's constitutionality on the grounds that it violates freedoms of expression and assembly.

City enforcement

Springfield's police chief says he is waiting for information about how his department will enforce the law, expected to take effect June 15.

Chief Robert Deu Pree said it is too early to tell what the ordinance really means, but that's typical of all new laws.

"The media generally don't report on a new law with this intensity," he said, "but with all new laws, there's a period of time where a number of legally trained people try to figure out what it means."

"We get direction on what those laws mean with procedures for enforcing it," he said. "Even if a law says one thing, the means to get there is another thing. Before it goes into effect, city attorneys and district attorneys will go over it and work with us on it."

This is the time when people "beat each other up over what it means," Deu Pree said.

Dave Fidanque, associate director of the Oregon chapter of the ACLU, questioned whether enforcement of the Oregon hate crime statutes against gays and lesbians will be affected.

Dupree said it hit his understanding from the district attorney that the police department will continue enforcing state laws as it has in the past, unless information is received otherwise.

"We don't plan on changing what we do," he said. "My understanding is that the charter amendment intent is to prevent the government from doing things that promote homosexual behavior. I don't envision any change in how the police would approach things."

Protecting jobs

Measure 20-08 allows the city to adopt a provision "prohibiting employment decisions based on factors not directly related to employment."

Councilman Walters' said his intent to instate such a provision is an effort to reassure people that jobs, in any field, are not at risk.

"The full impact of this won't be known until it's put in practice," Walters said. "The only time I can see where sex

preference would be an issue is if the person were using their position to advance gay rights.

"But that would be true for anyone who's misusing their work time," he said.

Scott Lively, communications director for the Oregon Citizens Alliance, which sponsored the initiative, said he doesn't expect much will change in Springfield.

"It's not true that gays and lesbians will be discriminated against for no reason," Lively said. "It will not allow the persecution of people. I don't think you'll see any changes in housing or employment in Springfield."

The employment clause was included specifically "to show that we do not promote discrimination of homosexuals," he said. "If they're being obnoxious about it, then they should be fired, but if they keep it to themselves, then it's OK."

Peggy Norman, campaign director for the Portland-based Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, said she isn't so sure employment won't be affected. The group is one of several that opposed the OCA and 20-08.

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ALL THAT JAV

Oregon's Kim Hyatt is "feet and inches above the rest" of the competition in today's javelin event at Hayward Field for the PAC-10 track and field finals.

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NEW INSURANCE

Next year's ASUO student insurance program will feature a new carrier and new policies, including the possibility for domestic partners to be dependents.

See **INSURANCE**, Page 12



IMAGES

"Images of Women," a display of sculptures and photos, is on display.

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