

Open the doors: Let students attend

According to Professor Davison Soper, president of the University Senate and acting chairman of the Assembly Committee on Multicultural Curriculum, the Oct. 13 meeting of the committee was, for some reason, not open to guests. He said the group was new and needed privacy to get to know one another.

Picture a fairly stale room somewhere deep in the bowels of the University. In that room, under the lovely glare of fluorescent lights, is an intimate meeting of people trying to get to know one another. Most likely, if this was a regular University meeting, all that the people wanted to do was to get finished with it and go home.

People have the right to be interested and informed. The right to attend should not even be an issue.

Incidental Fee Committee member Preston Cannon said that jaws dropped when he walked into that room on Oct. 13. It is strange that a meeting intended to allow people to get to know one another could conjure up that kind of emotion. Granted, the multicultural curriculum committee is acting in the best interest of the University, but people have the right to be interested and informed. The right to attend should not even be an issue.

These meetings that are for the benefit of the students, and the University should generate interest. Instead, an incident like this does just the opposite. People who might have interest in this committee or others around campus are sure to be less eager to provide insight if this is the feeling that is being transmitted. Most people at the University are here because they have a general interest in education. Part of the education process is the opportunity to serve on committees and show interest in the workings of the University.

The Assembly Committee on Multicultural Curriculum seems like the kind of committee that would beg for interest rather than turn it away. But even if it isn't, it ought to have accommodated Cannon. After all, Cannon is a member of the Incidental Fee Committee, not some heckler.

What's more, Cannon was invited to the meeting by a member of the committee: Diana Collins Puente. While he shouldn't have had to receive that invitation (these meetings should be open to all), the fact that he did makes it seem even more indefensible that he was sent on his way.

Peter Swan, assistant to the president for legal affairs, found that the meeting did fall under the Oregon Open Meetings Law. Soper most likely wasn't aware of this law, but that doesn't excuse his action. At a University where the exchange of ideas is supposedly valued, no meeting of this type should have to fall under some law in order for it to be made open to the public.



OPINION

Beware of cops on Halloween



LIA SALCICCIA

Beware, all ye innocents: Hallows draws near.

Out into the witching hour come creatures that we fear.

Clad in blue and wielding guns, they're waiting by the phone.

For a call that gives them license to come bursting in your home.

Once again, the October partying season begins, opening up a myriad of social opportunities for college revelers. People will pull out all of the stops to plan Halloween festivities, complete with wacky costumes and lots of beer.

But come midnight, the real ghouls of Halloween will hit the streets. Dressed in frightful blue cotton over bulletproof vests, they hungrily scan your neighborhood for happy young people having fun. And when the Blue Demons catch you, they will not let you go until they have scared the pride, the dignity and the money out of you.

Let me explain my apparent distaste with police officers, along with my friendly seasonal warning to beware of them this Halloween. You see, it is my experience that many of them would rather spend your tax dollars busting harmless parties than on any real dangers to the community.

Take my previous Halloween, for example. The woman who lived behind my house called the cops because there was a prowler in a cowboy outfit staring into her window. Hysterical, the single mother told the police that the creep who had scared her may have been from the party around the corner. They told her not to fear, they'd be right there.

But they never bothered to check up on my frightened neighbor. They never bothered to investigate the party either, which was a two-kegger at the house next door to mine. Instead, two Eugene police officers chose to bypass both the peeping-tom complaint and the real party, and forced entry into my home so that they could bust 15 college students with a total of a 12-pack of beer between them.

Frightful, truly frightful.

To condense a long, rather amusing story into a short one: I received a citation for "furnishing alcohol to minors" that night.

No matter that I was tombstone sober. No matter that I was a minor myself, with no fake ID to buy beer for the other minors. No matter that they violated the Fourth Amendment with an illegal entry and search of my home.

I greeted them outside a closed door with a "What seems to be the problem, officer?" and one of the officers told me he and his partner "had better take a look inside to see what you are serving." Aware of my rights, I told him that he wasn't invited inside. He then informed me that I was under arrest and burst in.

I don't think they liked getting a law lesson from a college kid in a vampire costume.

No matter that the two officers "carded" all of the people there claiming to be age 21 and over, and then let them all go. No matter that the people at the two-keg party next door, forewarned by the woman who called, were waiting for the cops to come knock on their door.

In this day and age, the ghosts and goblins can't even claim the young as their Hallows victims anymore. The young belong to the cops now.

I have a theory about all of this. Once upon a time, police officers were people too, kids even. They used to dress up in silly and magical costumes on Halloween and probably stole

candy from littler kids, threw eggs at cars and even got obnoxiously drunk when they outgrew those activities.

Now, because they are grown-ups and cops, they see the holiday in a different light. It means increased security concerns of teen-age vandals running amok and of out of control costume parties. Halloween is no longer fun, it's work.

Bitter about no longer being able to bob for apples, they bob for parties.

Not to say that police officers aren't deserving of some praise in society. Their absence would make the city a scary place indeed. (I'm thinking specifically from the point of view of a female who is sometimes afraid of the night and who lurks in it.)

But if the two particular officers who invaded my home were concerned with the original complaint that brought them there (a female who feared what lurked in the night) instead of taking the easy way out, they would inspire much more of my respect for their occupation, instead of snotty little columns about their ineptitude.

There are real dangers out there to be investigated. Students have been drinking forever and will continue to do so. The Halloween season poses threats of vandalism, violence and other crimes more serious than a college booze-a-thon. In that light, doesn't the act of illegally searching and citing a bunch of students for furnishing alcohol to minors seem a tad wasteful of time and money?

Incidentally, the story has a relatively happy ending. I pleaded not guilty in court (which aroused a contemptuous look from the judge, who also must have thought "the party" was at my house) and got a lawyer. Once my lawyer told the details of the case to the district attorney, the charges against me were immediately dropped.

But they never did find that prowler.

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