

'Emerald' independence is what it's all about

By Gerry Gazlay

For nearly a century, the *Oregon Daily Emerald* has been the most important medium of communication on the campus of this University. Yet many members of the University community are generally unaware of the *Emerald's* historical development, legal structure or organizational purpose.

The *Emerald* had its genesis in *The Oregon Weekly*, which was first published by the Eutaxian, Laurean and Philologist Societies. Volume 1, No. 1 appeared on Monday, Feb. 12, 1900. When the newspaper resumed publication after the summer break on Oct. 1, 1900, it had become a publication of the ASUO, which it remained until 1952.

In fall 1909 the paper began publishing twice a week and its name was changed to the *Oregon Emerald*. In 1914 it began publishing three times a week. When publication was finally stepped up to five times a week in the fall of 1920, the newspaper became the *Oregon Daily Emerald*.

Between 1952 and 1971 the *Emerald* was published by the University's Student Publications Board. After more than a year of planning and preparation to make the *ODE* an independent organization, the publications board was abolished so that the *ODE* could be "privatized" and converted into a nonprofit publishing corporation financially and legally separated from the University. This new entity — the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Company, Inc. — came into a state of legal existence under the provisions of the Oregon Non-profit Corporation Act on Oct. 26, 1971.

One of the primary reasons for making the *ODE* independent was to protect the editorial autonomy of the University's principal student newspaper. During the Vietnam War era, many student

publications were critical of government policies, which sometimes resulted in publicly supported universities being pressured by offended legislators and alumni.

But independence was also seen as a way to allow for growth potential. Under the old system, all excess monies realized from *Emerald* operations were returned to the ASUO general fund at the end of the fiscal year. As an independent corporation, it was felt, the *ODE* could put its surplus funds back into the paper's operation, thereby enabling the corporation to make future capital expenditures (such as new equipment) and enhance its ability to publish a first-rate student newspaper.

The *ODE* is a largely self-supporting organization; more than 80 percent of the corporation's revenues comes from advertising sales. About 17 percent comes from IFC funding which is, in effect, a bulk subscription for University students paid from student fees.

The *ODE* also pays its own way. The corporation leases office space in the EMU, owns its own telephone system, pays for all telephone bills, supplies and equipment, issues its own payroll and pays taxes.

The *ODE* employs seven non-students (including the paper's general manager, production manager and advertising director) and about 65 students (including the paper's editor). During the course of a year, the *ODE* also utilizes the services of, perhaps, 70 to 80 student freelance writers.

The *ODE's* corporate mission is reflected in the preamble to its bylaws, which states that the "sole and exclusive purpose of this nonprofit corporation is to provide education and training for University of Oregon students in all aspects of newspaper production of an independent stu-

dent newspaper."

The *ODE* is governed by a 10-person volunteer board of directors. Three of its members are elected by and from the ranks of student employees in the paper's news, advertising and production departments. Two board members are students appointed by the ASUO president to represent the general student body. The University president appoints two faculty or staff employees of the University to serve on the board. And the board itself elects three at-large members; these seats have traditionally been held by members of the outside business community.

The general manager and editor both report directly to the board of directors. The general manager has responsibility for managing the administrative, business and fiscal affairs of the corporation. Under the *ODE's* bylaws, the editor, who must be a University student, has "final

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authority for all editorial operations and all editorial content" for the *Emerald*. The board of directors hires the editor each academic year, but is not involved in the formulation of the *Emerald's* news or editorial policies.

The *ODE* does not have any shareholders or corporate members. No individual or group derives any economic benefit from the operation of the corporation, except for employees and freelance writers who receive wages for services rendered.

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The *Emerald* is "independent" because it is not legally a part of the ASUO, the University or the State Board of Higher Education. It's truly a "student" newspaper because, as mentioned above, only the student editor controls the paper's news and editorial content.

For me, these two features are the essence of what the *Oregon Daily Emerald* is all about, and represent the paper's principal contribution to the University community.

Gerry Gazlay is an at-large member of the Emerald board of directors.

LETTERS

Even "hets"

Though it's apparent that the main targets under attack by the Oregon Citizens Alliance are homosexuals and bisexuals, I believe that Professor Henry Alley's comment that "even heterosexual people can show their support" in opposing the OCA by wearing pink triangle buttons during Hate Free Week (*ODE*, Nov. 16) puts emphasis where none should be.

To say "even heterosexuals" implies, to a degree, that support from straight citizens is somewhat out of the norm. The fact is that several "hets" find the OCA agenda chilling and threatening to basic, fundamental rights of all citizens.

For example, the OCA distributed a pamphlet titled "What Is the Best Use of a Woman?" You guessed it: the best "use of" a woman is to be a wife and moth-

er, according to the OCA. This leaves me out, a non-wife and a non-mother. And if you don't fit the narrow confines of a "right life" then you are at risk of being at the receiving end of OCA bigotry, gay or straight... plain and simple.

The lion's share of OCA enmity is indeed targeting gays, lesbians and bisexuals. But let's not forget that their full agenda is far more broad-reaching, encompassing land use issues/environmental concerns (OCA is anti-environmentalism, natch), church/state meshing (they're for it) and on and on.

So this "straight" wears buttons opposing the OCA daily, both out of support for my gay/lesbian/bisexual brothers and sisters, and also to protect my own ass. Charity, and vigilance, begins at home.

Carol Berg
Eugene

LETTERS POLICY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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