

LGBA plans events for next year

By Daniel West
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Alliance is gearing up for next year, scheduling events such as safe sex workshops, a winter dance and Queer Fest, a film festival and other programs.

"I'm hoping to continue the momentum from last year. I want to increase the visibility of gays and lesbians on campus. Also, we are trying to make the office inviting for all students and getting more people involved," said Rachel Dueker, the LGBA co-director.

The safe sex workshops will feature men's and women's discussion. They will be conducted with separate instructors and focus on issues specific to each group. Then, the groups will come together to talk about safe sex in general and share ideas.

"We've never had a problem with heterosexual women coming to the discussions, but we've had trouble trying to get heterosexual men attending a discussion of safe sex gear toward homosexual men," Dueker said.

Periodically, LGBA will publish advertisements in the *Emerald* that will focus on AIDS prevention. The design of the advertisements will be straightforward and hard-hitting. They will focus on the theme of loving and respecting yourself.

On a social level, the annual Queer Fest will return next year. The film fest will include two feature films from known gay directors and various amateur films.

These films give many gay and lesbian students an opportunity for them to see films from gay and lesbian directors and actors. Often, these films reflect their culture and lifestyle — something that's often missing in mainstream movies.

Also, the center will sponsor a winter dance in January. This

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dance won't be formal, just a time for people to mingle and socialize.

"Everyone is welcome," Dueker said. But she warns, "respect the fact that men will be dancing with men and women will be dancing with women. Don't expect our behavior to change just because you're there."

On a serious note, LGBA will continue its youth groups and drop-ins. The youth group meets every Monday night. The group, which is composed of gay and lesbian students between the ages of 18-25, discusses serious issues of coming out, sexual identity and experiences, and the issues that are discussed in the group remain confidential.

The drop-ins are very similar to the youth groups, except that they have a specific audience that they target. For example, the women's drop-in group meets every Tuesday night and deals with topics about women and lesbians. This also allows them to interact with each other.

There are plans for next year to start a men's drop-in group that will be modeled like the women's group, but specifically dealing with men's issues.

The LGBA was started back in the 1960s as the Gay People's Alliance. The center didn't receive funding from the University until 1973 because of a mandatory waiting period imposed by the University on all new groups.

In the late 1970s, the name of

the center was changed to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance to recognize everyone, men and women. In the 1980s and 1990s, the issue of bisexuality became apparent, so the name of the center changed to once again include bisexuals.

"People began to talk about bisexuality as another facet of homosexuality and lesbianism, as not being able to decide between homosexuality and heterosexuality," Dueker said.

LGBA is the oldest student union of this type on the West Coast. Also, the University has a coordinator who deals with gay and lesbian issues, Jacqueline Balzer. She specifically deals with issues that concern them, and this position is unique because it's the only one of this type in the United States.

"The LGBA provides many services to the gays, lesbians and heterosexual students in general. The center is a place where gays rights can be upheld and protected, and the center offers safety and education.

"It's a safe place to be where education can take place in hope that homophobia can cease. All student groups should have some type of outreach program where all students can learn from each other," Dueker said.

Dueker hopes the LGBA takes a role in the new Multicultural Center that is scheduled to open early next year. This center will bring together students of all ethnic backgrounds to learn about other cultures, and this would allow the LGBA to interact with other student unions.

"We all at some point interact with each other. You can be black and gay. So you have more issues in your life to deal with. We need to get together and mingle in order to learn more about each other," Dueker said.

CONDOMS

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spermicide Nonoxynol-9 are promoted heavily, many students expect to see an expiration date on all condoms.

Beaty asked University Housing officials about the condoms and was told not to worry. He said he was informed that the dates given on the packages were for when the condoms were made, not when they expired. This still left the question of how long the condoms were good for.

Schmid Laboratories, the makers of many condoms, including the ones sold in campus vending machines and the Student Health Center, gives its products without

Nonoxynol-9 about a five-year life span. The spermicide is given a three-year limit.

"Generally, consumers want to know how old condoms are and how long they have been on a shelf or in a vending machine," said Al Belleuchia of Protex, which supplies the condoms in the campus vending machines. Protex is a subsidiary of Schmid.

Belleuchia said no condom manufacturer can guarantee its product after it leaves the factory. Once condoms are shipped, the manufacturer has no way of making sure that the condoms are being stored properly in a place that is not too hot or too cold, Belleuchia said.

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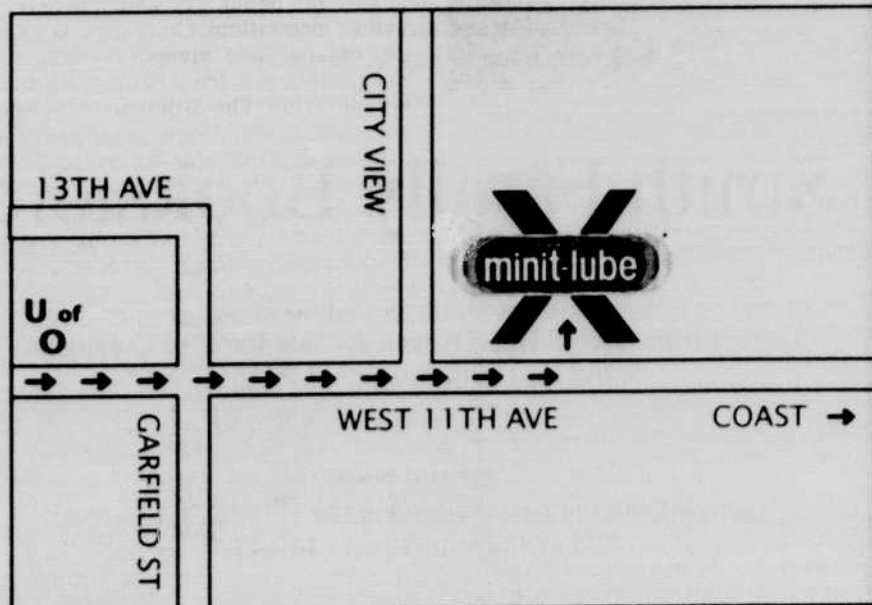
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