

# Commission reviews community relations efforts

Suzanne Marta  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Eugene Human Rights Commission reviewed efforts to improve community relations, emphasizing harassment, discrimination and diversity issues in a meeting Tuesday with the Department of Public Safety.

The main discussion of the review concerned the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the citizen Allegation/Inquiry/Commendation (AIC) procedure.

The Department of Public Safety proposed that AIC procedure be changed to include a civilian facilitator or mentor to reduce the feeling of intimidati-

tion or vulnerability.

Members of the commission asked the department to make it a standard policy for police officers to give citizens a business card with their name and badge number on it.

"Many people are so traumatized that they don't even think to ask for the officer's name," said Rya Philips, a human rights commissioner.

The current AIC procedure requires citizens to file complaints at the police department — a policy criticized by commission members because it subjects victims to more police intimidation.

"It's very clear to me that people who have experienced intimidation or have been harassed by the police don't file formal complaints because they already feel very vulnerable," said Marion Malcolm, another human rights commissioner.

Commissioner Ron Chase said that, with AIC procedural changes, he expects the number of complaints filed to increase.

Commissioner Peter Wotton was pleased with departmental efforts in finding solutions to issues that create tension between the community and the department.

"There is a lot of live growth

in improving community relations," Wotton said. "If we cut back on services, we also cut back this growth. We need to nurture this growth."

The review also discussed the serious lack of resources within the department for the hearing-impaired and for spanish-speaking persons.

Currently, the department has only one spanish-speaking 911 emergency operator and only one police officer with signing abilities for the hearing-impaired.

"It concerns me that in 1989 there were no Hispanic police officers and, five years later,

there still aren't any," said Marshall Saucedo, chairman of the human rights committee for harassment and discrimination and director of the University office of multicultural affairs.

Statistics like these are alarming for Sharisse Howard, member of the human rights education and outreach committee and current University student.

"It's absolutely ridiculous that they have one spanish-speaking 911 operator and no Hispanic police officers when there is a population of 5,000 to 10,000 Hispanics in the Eugene community," she said.

## Students of color to visit University

Jennifer Carr  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

More than 200 Oregon high school students of color are expected to visit the University on Thursday, to sample college life and participate in 'Gateway to the Future.'

This free program, sponsored by the University Office of Admissions and Office of Multicultural Affairs, encourages African-American, Asian/Pacific-American, Chicano/Latino and Native American high school students to further their education at the post-secondary level.

Large numbers of high school students of color don't consider a university education because of family histories and financial needs, said Stephanie Bugge, an admissions counselor. The University wants to break down these barriers.

"This is an opportunity for junior and senior high school students of color to come to campus and see University life," Bugge said. "We want them to know that higher education is out there, is not out of reach and that the opportunity exists."

'Gateway to the Future' participants will learn how to find financial aid, how to look for housing and the step-by-step admissions process. These issues are dealt with in a way that is distinct to people of color, said Allison Brossia, a Native American recruiter and admissions counselor for the University.

"Students are able to feel safe in the community setting we create and are able to ask questions in their native language," Brossia said.

Student volunteers from various ethnic groups on campus help make this program so successful. Volunteers from the Asian/Pacific-American, Black, MEChA and Native American Student Unions spend time with visiting students with whom they share a similar racial and ethnic background.

"Student volunteers provide a reality check for these students," Bugge said. "They are able to give personal experiences on a primarily white campus. They can tell potential students what it's like to be a student of color at U of O."

'Gateway to the Future' has become a very popular program. The Office of Admissions sent letters to all Oregon high schools, informing them of the program. The response was so large, the University was forced to ask high schools to limit themselves to 10 students per school.

"This program is very popular and successful," Brossia said. "As soon as the holiday season was over, people were calling and asking about it. People look forward to it every year."

The number of students of color enrolled at the University has increased steadily with the Hispanic student population having the largest increase, Brossia said.

## Children raise funds to help save killer whale seen in 'Free Willy'

Larry Haft  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Four Eugene children donned clown makeup and baggy pants last Saturday to help save a killer whale. The children made balloon animals for visitors to the Fifth Street Public Market and asked for donations to help save Keiko, the orca whale who starred in the movie *Free Willy*.

"We read about Keiko and wanted to help raise some of the money needed to free him," Sarah Wissig said. She was joined by Michael Wissig, Tori Harris, and Taryn Harris.

Keiko was captured near the southwest coast of Iceland more than 10 years ago. In 1985, he was sold to the Reino Aventura Theme Park in Mexico City where he is currently maintained in an oval tank too small for him. The tank uses artificial sea water. Like other whales kept in this type of environment, Keiko has developed wart-like growths believed to be caused by a stress-related Papilloma virus.

Veterinary experts believe his skin condition will immediately improve if Keiko is returned to natural sea water. Another concern is damage to Keiko's teeth resulting from his gnawing on the concrete sides of his tank.

In an effort to save Keiko, Earth Island

Institute, a San Francisco based environmental group, created the *Free Willy/Keiko* Foundation.

The Foundation will assist in the care, treatment, relocation and possible future release of the whale. Its plan is to transfer Keiko to a specially constructed facility at the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport. That facility will cost over \$10 million and include a new two million-gallon tank, loading dock, freezer and filtration equipment.

So far, the Foundation has raised over \$5 million. Warner Bros. and New Regency Productions, the makers of *Free Willy*, provided an initial \$2 million and an anonymous donor from Washington state donated another \$2 million.

In addition to raising another \$5 million, a formal agreement to transfer Keiko from Reino Aventura to the Oregon Coast Aquarium must be signed. According to David Phillips, Earth Island executive director, "We're poised to do that."

The donations raised by the children last Saturday will become part of the needed \$5 million. Donations can be sent to: *Free Willy/Keiko* Foundation, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, California, 94133.

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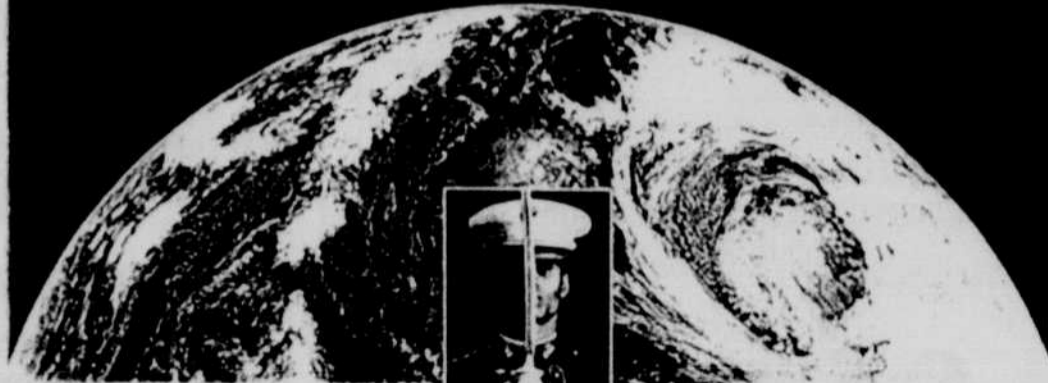
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