

University recycling, students advocate bottle bill

Ben Moebius

Oregon Daily Emerald

If everything works out for a group of students from Alan Dickman's global ecology class, the governor and the Oregon Legislature will be thinking a lot about iced tea and fruit drinks next week.

Students Stephanie Striefel, Andrea Mikunda and Baylen Sharp-Briggs are working with Karyn Kaplan, the University's recycling program manager, to promote an expanded Oregon bottle bill by sending the governor and Oregon legislators postcards signed by students.

The postcards urge legislators to support expansion of the bottle bill to include noncarbonated beverages. The group will work at a booth gathering signatures in the EMU all next week from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The group is doing the project as part of a class grade. They have already set up a display case next to the EMU Fishbowl & Deli, which shows relevant facts about beverage container waste.

Oregon's current bottle bill, the first

state law of its kind, was enacted in 1971. The bill requires that all beer and carbonated beverages have a minimum refund value of 5 cents. The bill was signed by Gov. Tom McCall and was heralded as a highly effective anti-littering measure.

According to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, by 1986 the beverage container portion of roadside litter was 4 percent, down from 40 percent prior to the bottle bill.

However, Americans are now guzzling more iced tea and fruit-flavored drinks than ever before, creating a glut of non-refundable bottles. Statistics compiled by Rep. Floyd Prozanski state that an estimated 57,000 tons of non-deposit glass containers were disposed of in Oregon in 1993.

A few proposals dealing with the bottle bill have sprung up or will in the next few days in the Oregon Legislature. An amendment that will be proposed next week to expand the bill was created through the collaborative efforts of many Oregon representatives.

Prozanski and fellow Eugene Rep. Cynthia Wooten joined with Portland Reps. Lisa Naito, Kate Brown, George Elghemey, Anitra Rasmussen and Kitty Piercy to work on the amendment.

The amendment would enlarge the scope of the current bill to cover "any ready-to-drink liquid," excluding dairy drinks. The amendment would also raise the deposit to 10 cents per container.

Prozanski said the amendment carries wide support with the public, but it might meet with some resistance from retailers. "There are some concerns about increased volume of returns," he said. "But we can work around those concerns. The amendment will definitely be modified as it's debated."

Portland Sen. Ron Cease, D-Ore., has already sponsored a general proposal to expand the bottle bill to include noncarbonated beverages, except for dairy products. Cease said he proposed the bill for a high school student he knows who is concerned with the issue.

Cease admits his bill does not have

much chance of passing but said it will, hopefully, create dialogue on the issue. "I do not think there is enough support in the Legislature to expand the bottle bill at this time," he said. "I just hope we can keep it from being narrowed."

Cease is referring to a bill rumored to be brewing in the Senate that would end all deposits on beverage containers and instead expand curbside recycling to handle the containers, taking retail stores out of the redemption process.

Large stores, such as Safeway Inc. and Fred Meyer, have complained that they have to refund more bottles than they sell and that the old bottles create unsanitary conditions in the stores, Cease said.

Phil Bentley, Prozanski's legislative assistant, said a curbside recycling bill would sharply decrease the number of returns. "The problem is, many people buy a soda at the store and that bottle does not make it back home," he said. "The most convenient redemption location is at the stores."

Homeless youths to read their prose, poetry

Suzanne Marta

Oregon Daily Emerald

Homeless youths will present original works of prose and poetry in an open-mic reading sponsored by Mother Kali's bookstore this Saturday.

The event, which begins at 8 p.m., will give homeless children, known as "Mall Ratz" or "Paper box kids," a chance to express their feelings on issues surrounding homelessness.

The open-mic will be followed by an open discussion for people to ask questions and express concerns about homeless youths.

The ramifications of reopening Willamette Street and demolition of the downtown fountain, which now serve as a hangout for the children, will also be discussed at the event.

Izzie Harbaugh, manager of Mother Kali's, said the open-mic was important for increasing community awareness.

"I think they deserve an opportunity to tell their story," she said. "(Homelessness) is an important issue and one that more people need to address."

The event was organized by Linda Saylor, a Eugene woman who has been working with the kids independently since August 1994. Saylor voluntarily feeds anywhere from two to 12 youths each night from her

home.

"It's something that is real important to me," she said.

With guidance from Saylor, the youths have produced a publicly and privately-funded newsletter called *Rattitudes: Mixed Media from the Mall*, which is free and is distributed through area businesses.

According to Saylor, "Rattitudes" is the only newsletter in the state and quite possibly in the entire Northwest that is the true, uncensored voice of the youths.

"It's rough around the edges and very unpolished, but it's theirs," Saylor said.

Saylor, who has two children of her own, encourages the homeless youths to write and create artwork as an outlet for their feelings and frustrations.

"These kids are full of potential," she said. "They are talented and gifted."

Some of the artwork produced by the youths is being sold in area businesses like Circle of Hands.

"Their poetry is grabbing, it's really appealing," Saylor said.

According to Saylor one issue that faces homeless children is that city laws make it a crime for citizens to house runaway youths overnight.

"When it is one in the morning, it should be a crime to shut the door in these kids' faces," she said.

Saylor said many of these children have run away from unimaginable horrors.

"A lot of things these kids are running from are worse than any nightmare that any of us will ever have," she said.

Saylor hopes that the open-mic will increase awareness about problems faced by homeless youths.

"We have to realize that there is a gap that needs to be bridged," Saylor said. "These kids want to be wanted."

"When sleeping in a dumpster is more appealing than going home, we need to look at what going home is like for these kids," she said.

Religious Seminars presented

Laurie Erickson

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The First United Methodist Church in Eugene will hold their second set of workshops in connection with their 28th annual "Interchurch Mission Seminars," this Sunday.

The seminars were first held in 1986 — making the event the oldest and largest Christian program in the Eugene-Springfield area. The program is funded through various churches and sponsors in the community as well as voluntary offerings.

Sunday's workshops will focus on the following mission topics: "Understanding Religion in Africa," "Reducing Violence," "Building Assets in Youth" and "Family Crises."

Seminar leaders will include members from the Interfaith Emergency Shelters and a panel of youths who have been involved in gang activity.

The seminar begins Sunday at 3:30 p.m. with registration and displays. Worship and seminars will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. with a fellowship and light supper following the workshops.

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