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More information in the ASUO office, Suite 4 EMU or call 346-3724.
Applications due Friday, January 16th & interviews scheduled ASAP

Conference to focus on cults

The program will cover topics ranging from cult recruitment to extremist-group mentality

By Kari Thorene
Higher Education Reporter

"There is always the potential of violence with these groups," said research analyst Robert Crawford about militia, white supremacists and other extremist groups.

Crawford works for the Coalition for Human Dignity, a group that monitors extremist groups. These groups will be the focus of a conference organized by the University Substance Abuse Prevention Program. "Destructive Cults, Conspiracies and Extremist Groups" will take place this Friday and Saturday.

Program administrator Miki Mace said student complaints were the impetus for the conference. "Occasionally, and throughout the year, I meet students who are using alcohol or drugs to mask having been racially abused or having been in cults," she said.

"It doesn't happen in large proportion on campus, but large enough to warrant attention."

Keynote speaker Jack Levin, a Northeastern University sociology professor, will present "Cults, Conspiracies and Extremist Groups" on Friday. Levin has written or co-authored 18 books dealing with prejudice, violence, criminal homicide and social psychology.

The conference will also include presentations on Oregon cults, recruitment on college campuses, ritual abuse, the Internet as a recruitment tool and the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas.

Mace defined five characteristics that make a group a cult: the use of psychological coercion to recruit and retain members; the appearance of an elite society (e.g. many of the white supremacist groups); a charismatic, self-appointed founding leader; belief that ends justify means in terms of recruitment and funding; and the funds gathered don't benefit members or society as a whole.

Crawford said the coalition has seen evidence of extremist groups in the Eugene area. "There has been skinhead activity and so-called Christian Patriot activity — those are the two main groups," he said.

The Christian Patriots are the largest segment of the white supremacist movement, Crawford said. "They say that there are two types of citizens — 'white state citizens' and '14th Amendment citizens,' who are minorities," he said.

Some of the actions Christian Patriot groups can involve themselves in include setting up common-law courts, where the group "claims they make the laws," serving as a base for the militia movement, and harassing other people by filing liens on their homes, Crawford said.

The skinhead group Aryan Pride has been active in Eugene, and another skinhead group called Volksfront has recently distributed literature here, Crawford said.

These groups have a range of recruitment methods available to them, Crawford said, including leafletting and buying ad space in campus publications. California's Committee for the Open Debate of the Holocaust, for example, has tried to purchase ad space in university newspapers, he said.

Some groups set up conservative or cultural organizations on campuses that in reality act as front organizations for supremacist groups, Crawford said. "They are supposed to gather to discuss having European heritage and culture, but the group leaders hold neo-Nazi and racist ideas," he said.

The conference will be held on Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day in the Performance Hall at the Lane County Fairgrounds, 796 W. 13th Ave.

Students can get two credits for completion of both sessions. Conference registration costs $80. Community members may enroll for $40.

Student to make zero tolerance proposal

Sgt. Dave Poppe says there are not enough officers to enforce a zero tolerance policy completely

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

The zero tolerance policy implemented by the Eugene Police Department last fall will continue to be enforced, according to Sgt. David Poppe.

Poppe said the idea for the policy resulted from the lack of responsibility by people and the lack of party control in the West University area, mainly during the month of October.

The zero tolerance policy was created by the police to crack down on first-time offenders and send a message to community offenders.

Although Poppe said the police will continue to crack down on those who choose to break the laws, he understands the realization of zero tolerance is not likely.

"We'll never get to zero tolerance," he said. "That's an understatement."

Poppe said fewer available officers could reduce the amount of enforcement in the campus area.

"We are going to enforce the law with the people we have," he said. "If you're underage and out there drinking, you're taking a chance."

The Campus Community Relations Task Force, a group composed of Poppe and several other members of the campus community, was created to deal with various problems in the University area.

The task force will most likely hear a proposal from a University student to transform the task force or create another group with better student representation.

Aaron Weck, a sophomore majoring in general science, said his proposal would allow students to become involved in problems such as landlord-tenant disputes and out-of-control parties.

Weck was to submit his proposal to the task force at a Dec. 8 meeting, but he did not attend because his idea was still in the planning stages.

Weck said he hopes to form a group or help the task force become one that is "constantly effective" when it comes to dealing with students' concerns.

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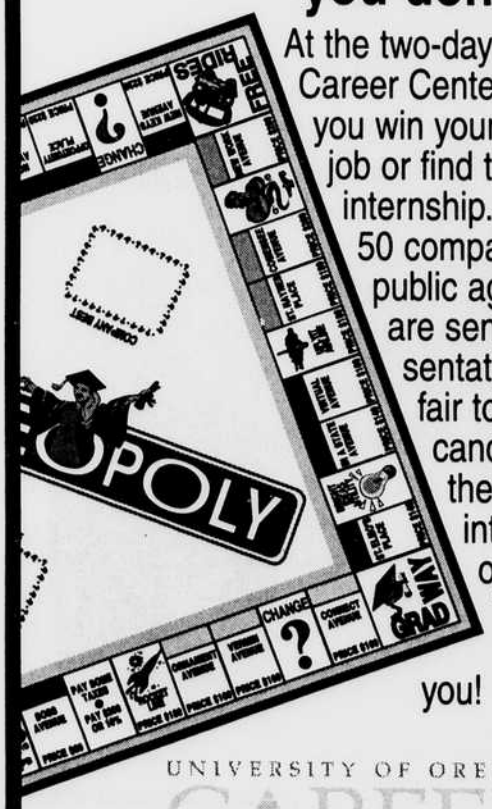

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