

# Amended OLCC code gives local venues leeway

■ A change from initial drafts will now allow local bars and dance halls to stay in business

By Andrew Adams

Oregon Daily Emerald  
Workers at the WOW Hall, Eugene's only entertainment venue that regularly admits both minors and people of drinking age, are satisfied with amendments made to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's regulations code for businesses serving alcohol.

The changes drafted last year would have barred all-age venues from serving alcohol, forcing those businesses to operate either without alcohol or close their doors to minors. That made the WOW Hall staff fearful that they would have to close because both options would sharply cut the hall's revenue.

But the current changes, adopted by the OLCC Sept. 8, leaves room for them to stay in business.

"We're actually pretty happy...it means we can keep operating," said Sarah Chyleck, WOW Hall concession manager and represen-

tative.

Venue owners must now ensure that minors are forbidden access to drinking areas. In addition, areas where minors are present must be well-lighted, allowing managers to watch for illegal activity, and an OLCC-approved security plan must be in place.

Chyleck said that because the WOW Hall's beer garden is in a basement and the hall's staff has been managing minors and drinkers for 20 years, the changes won't affect business. She is concerned about the changes, however, because they define the WOW Hall as a "dance hall."

"They've made us fit into this category and we see some problems down the road if they make some blanket laws that effect us when we aren't really that," she said.

She added the hall hosts acts that range from quiet sit-down events to loud bands for larger audiences.

Chyleck said, for the most part, she is relieved the hall can continue to offer beer, because beer sales

account for most of the business's operating costs, while ticket revenue goes toward paying performers.

While WOW Hall is unique in Eugene because it admits minors and serves alcohol, Chyleck said it's unfair that it received the brunt of the regulation.

"I'm a little irritated because [the changes] don't say anything about sports events," she said. "There's a lot of irresponsible serving going on at those events. Adults can sit directly next to a child [while] drinking beer."

Chyleck said the first-draft changes would have shut down the WOW Hall, had State Rep. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, not stepped in to help water down the amendments.

A long period of public comment and subsequent revisions irked OLCC Commissioner Kay Kennet, who assisted in drafting the changes.

"This rule has just taken forever to get in place," she said.

Kennet was one of four commissioners who voted in favor of the

amendments this month, along with Commissioner Robert Puentes, the sole dissenting vote.

Kennet said she initiated the changes because she did not like

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Kay Kennet  
OLCC Commissioner

the idea of minors in an environment where there was drinking.

"Liquor and the young people were mixed up; it was handled poorly and there were all kinds of potential problems. This will minimize the intrigue and temptation," she said.

The changes will also take out some of the attraction of alcohol for minors, Kennet said.

If a business is found in violation of the amended rules, which take effect Oct. 1, the sanctions will resemble those imposed if the business is caught selling alcohol

to minors, Kennet said. But, she added that the intent of the changes is more prohibitive than regulatory.

"The whole idea is to prevent these things from happening rather than catching people," she said.

OLCC spokesman Ken Palke said the punishment for a first offense will likely be a choice between a seven-day alcohol permit suspension and a \$1,155 fine. He said the OLCC doesn't expect to find many businesses in violation of the new regulations across the state. The few all-age clubs that do provide alcohol already have their bars in a separate area.

Bob Jensen, owner of the Wild Duck Brewery, said the changes will have little effect on his business, because his bar is already separate from the stage.

"When we go all ages in the back, we don't allow any alcohol there," he said. "You have to go to the front to the bar to drink."

Jensen said he understands why the OLCC made the changes, but added they should understand that most minors are not drinking in bars or dance halls but at parties, parks or even in their cars.

"It's an odd situation," he said. The OLCC "puts a lot of emphasis on this location, but the consumption is going on elsewhere."

## News briefs

### "Gap Creek" author to read at Knight Library

Author Robert Morgan will read from and sign copies of his book *Gap Creek* at 7:30 p.m. in the browsing room of Knight Library. Morgan is the author of two other re-released collections of short stories, "The Blue Valleys" and "The Mountains Won't Remember Us."

The New York Times compares Robert Morgan's writing style with country crooner Hank Williams' "raw, lonesome pathos." Oprah Winfrey selected Morgan's most recent book, *Gap Creek, The Story of a Marriage*, now in paperback, for her book club and a Baltimore Sun review claimed that the "harsh beauty of the landscape molds these lovers and its incendiary power nearly destroys them."

The event is free. For more information, browse <http://www.uoregon.edu/~bookstore.com/cforum/events.html> or call 346-4331.

### "Paleolithic Thoughts" at Law School

Museum Director Mel Aikens discusses "Paleolithic Thoughts," a look at the uncanny persistence of religious symbols and ideas in the oral tradition, at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 29 in Room 175 of the Knight Law Center. The free event is held in conjunction with "Oregon Archaeology Celebration 2000," a month-long series of events on the protection and interpretation of Oregon's heritage. For more information, browse <http://natural-history.uoregon.edu/> or call 346-3024.

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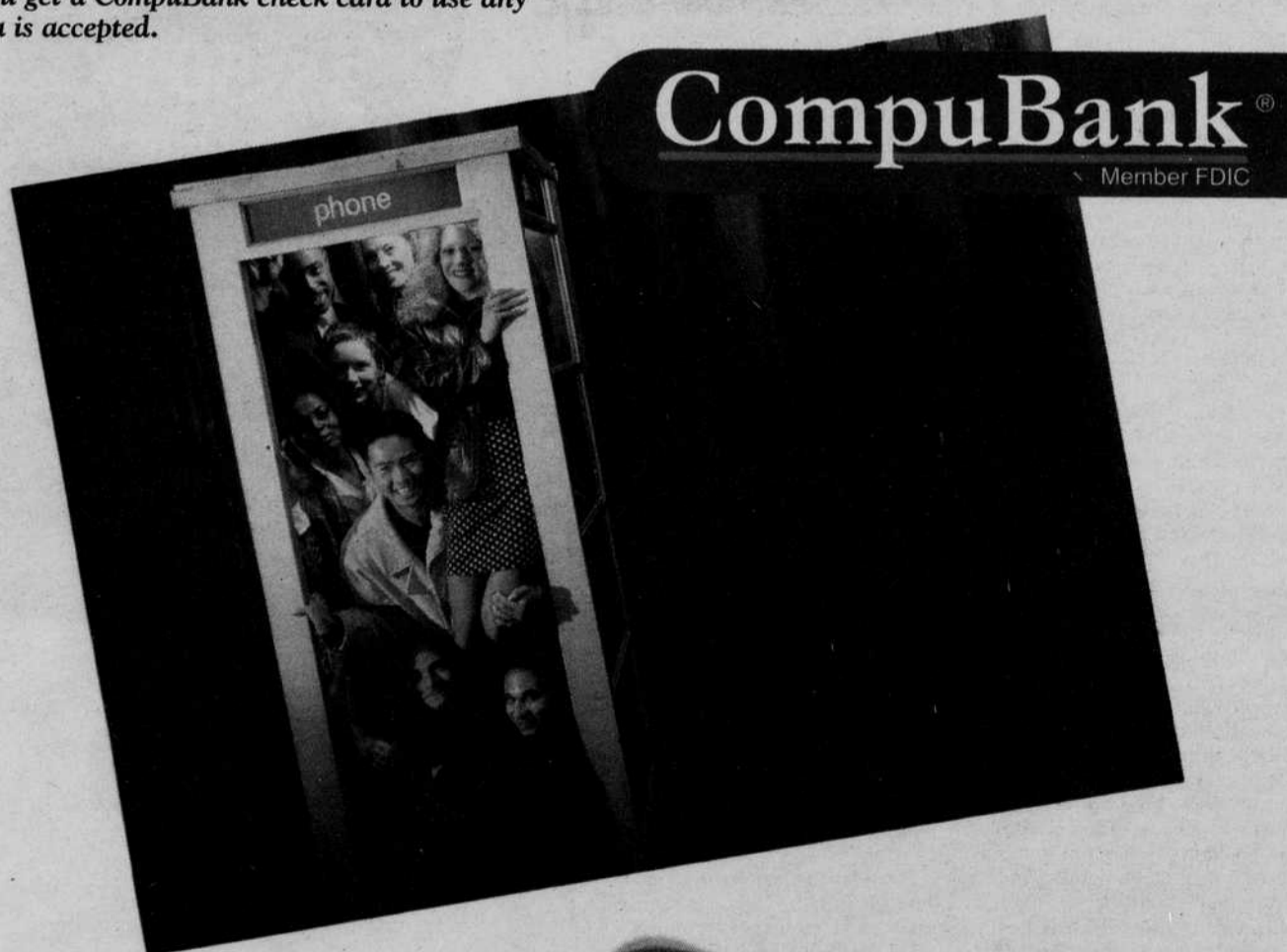
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