

Conference to address hate crimes awareness

■ An increase in Northwest hate crimes prompts a conference in Eugene to raise community awareness

By Rebecca Newell
Oregon Daily Emerald

With the Northwest seen by white supremacists as the "last great homeland" for the white race, the number of hate crimes has dramatically risen in the past two years, said Greg Rikhoff, city of Eugene human rights manager.

Local political leaders, diversity programs and law enforcement are combating the problem by raising awareness and involvement in the community before the problem reaches higher proportions, Rikhoff said.

As part of that effort, the city of Eugene and Eugene Police Department are serving as two of the hosts for the Oregon Hate Crimes Conference taking place Saturday through Monday at the Eugene Hilton and Conference Center. The theme of the three-day event is "Eliminating Bias Crimes - Healing Our Communities." Judy

Shepard, whose son Matthew Shepard, a gay University of Wyoming student, was beaten to death in 1998 because of his sexual orientation, will give the opening speech.

"The conference is important because there needs to be a general awareness in the community at minimum that [hate crimes] can and do occur," Eugene Police Chief Jim Hill said. "It's a real feather in the cap of the Eugene community to have it here."

Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore, who has supported national hate crimes legislation, is scheduled to speak Sunday.

The city of Eugene donated \$5,000 to the event, an amount matched by the EPD, said conference coordinator Tracy Schermerhorn. In addition to financial contributions, the city has donated staff hours and space for the conference, she said.

"It's the biggest civic project of the year in Eugene," Schermerhorn said.

"The idea for the conference came two years ago when we saw the rise in bias crimes," said Rikhoff, who serves as vice-chairman of the conference coordinating committee. "We discussed how important it is to get

the rest of Oregon looking at this issue, not just Portland."

In the past 20 years, white supremacists have targeted the Northwest because of its relatively small number of people of color, Rikhoff said. Pushing the "Northwest Imperative" — a movement to force out people of color and make the area white only — white supremacists have been the cause of most racial contention in Oregon. Several bombings in Eastern Oregon and Washington have been attributed to the Aryan Nations, Rikhoff said.

"In the last two years, there has been a huge increase in 'lone wolf crimes' — individuals acting alone in the effort to promote the white race by starting a race war," Rikhoff said.

Though attacks may be focused on a single person, they impact the entire community or culture of the victim, Rikhoff said. When Shepard was brutally murdered in Wyoming, it reverberated in gay and lesbian communities throughout the nation, he said.

"We really wanted to focus on getting not only an intellectual but emotional understanding on hate crimes. It's hard for privileged whites to un-

derstand what these crimes do to our culture," Rikhoff said.

Another focus of the workshop is promoting good relations between the police and community members, encouraging them to work together to combat hate crimes. The conference puts emphasis on the realization that stopping hate crimes is not a police issue alone, Hill said.

"There is a fair amount of negative marketing about police, and it's important we are seen as supporting and protecting all members of the community," Hill said. "We want to showcase to people the strategy and policies we have in place to deal with hate crimes."

In addition to speakers and performances, the conference will give participants a chance to network and brainstorm. Registrants include members of law enforcement, educators, activists and directors of organizations from every corner of the state, and they range in age from 14 to 95 years old, Rikhoff said.

"It's a great cross-section. We hope to get them empowered and give them some skill," Rikhoff said. "We want to give them the power to make a difference."

Oregon Hate Crimes Conference

When: Saturday through Monday

Where: Eugene Hilton and Conference Center

Cost: Registration is \$195, which includes all meals. Daily rates are also available.

For more information: Call (503) 295-6761 or (541) 682-8440.

Oregon Hate Crimes Conference Speakers:

Sen. Gordon Smith — supporter of national hate crimes legislation.

Judy Shepard — mother of Matthew Shepard.

Ken Stern — nationally known authority on hate crimes and anti-Semitism.

William Johnston — a former police officer now involved in educating the police and community.

Source: Oregon Hate Crimes Conference 2001

PFC debates Emerald, Philosophy Club budgets — again

■ The committee increased the Oregon Daily Emerald's budget from its first hearing

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

In the Programs Finance Committee's third night of budget appeal hearings, extended discussion arose Thursday over the Oregon Daily Emerald and the Philosophy Club budgets.

The Emerald asked the PFC for approval of its original budget request of \$132,870, but it left the meeting with \$120,000, an increase from the \$99,652 it was allocated at the first budget hearing Jan. 22.

The PFC gave the Emerald less

than it requested because committee members think the newspaper is capable of raising more funds on its own. PFC members agreed with ASUO Controller Danielle Hathaway, who suggested that the Emerald do more fundraising instead of asking the PFC for funding.

But Emerald General Manager Judy Riedl said the newspaper already raises about \$80,000 a year. Riedl and Emerald reporter Jeremy Lang said the newspaper has reduced its reliance on the student incidental fee, and the Emerald has not asked for a budget increase in the past five years.

"I am disappointed in the decision," Emerald Editor in Chief Jack

Clifford said. "But I cannot comment further until I have an opportunity to talk with the staff about our options."

Clifford said the newspaper had a fair hearing because Emerald members were given the opportunity to express their concerns.

Lisa Blasch, co-chair of the Philosophy Club, left the PFC meeting feeling the club had not received a fair budget reconsideration. The PFC decreased the Philosophy Club's budget by \$701.

Blasch said she didn't feel the PFC was interested in supporting student groups that want to pursue new opportunities.

Neither the Emerald nor the Philosophy Club was willing to com-

Hearing Results:

Oregon Daily Emerald

First Hearing \$99,652
Appeal \$120,000

Office of Student Advocacy

First Hearing \$93,707
Appeal \$104,013

Philosophy Club

First Hearing \$1,993
Reconsidered Budget \$1,292

Pre-Law Society

Tabled —
First Hearing \$331

Chinese Students and Scholars Association

Tabled —
First Hearing \$2,686

American Advertising Federation Ad Club

Tabled —
First Hearing \$6,580

Chinese Student Association

First Hearing \$7,413
Reconsidered Budget \$7,263

Arts and Administration Student Forum

First Hearing \$703
Reconsidered Budget \$618

ment as to whether they plan to appeal the PFC's decisions. Stu-

dent groups can appeal PFC budget decisions three times.

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