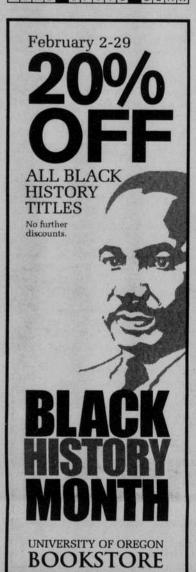
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'Condom Queen' gives Valentine goods

Missy Columbo spent Friday in a crown and cape, doling out condoms for the Take it to the Streets program

> By Lisa Catto **News Reporter**

University junior Missy Columbo may not be a superhero, but she did get to wear a sparkly crown and red cape with condoms attached to it Friday.

Columbo was dressed up as the "Condom Queen" to offer Valentinethemed goodie packs with condoms and lubricants to students she passed

"Happy Valentine's Day from the Health Center," she told students. "Enjoy."

Columbo, a second-term peer health educator with the University Health Center's Peer Health Education program, was dressed up as part of the health center's Take it to the Streets program.

The program consists of peer health educators walking around campus handing out University Health Center information to students. Generally they hand out wellness packs with health center services information and disinfectant lotion, or reproductive packs with information on contraceptives and family planning services with a condom keychain.

According to Peer Health

Education Coordinator Ramah Leith, the program was modeled after a similar one at Binghamton University in New York, but the health center modified it to incorporate campus events.

She thinks the program will improve awareness on campus.

"It's not to just get health information out," Leith said. "But to make people aware of the health center."

Columbo said students seem receptive to the program and that it works best to hand people information while walking instead of standing around and approaching students.

"For the most part people are pretty interested, but you'll get some people that are definitely not interested," she said. "It gets a lot of information to people who don't come by the health center."

University sophomore Ursula Evans-Heritage was participating in the program for the first time Friday and found that the people seemed responsive, especially with someone wearing condoms on a cape.

She became a peer health educator last fall to raise awareness about

"I thought it seemed like a really good way to get involved, and in high school I did peer sex education,' Evans-Heritage said.

Columbo joined for the leadership opportunity and said she enjoys walking around and meeting people.

Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Peer Health Educator Missy Columbo was one of several students handing out candy, condoms and hand sanitizer to students on Friday.

"It's one of my favorite things I've done on campus in the three years I've been here," she said.

The peer health program is a twoterm class with the health center that offers four credits per term. Second-term educators can pick a project to oversee. Evans-Heritage works on the Suicide Prevention Task Force and is the publicity coordinator for Take Back the Night, while Columbo works with the Take it to the Streets program.

Currently, the other peer educators rotate to work with Columbo to pass out information. Leith said that the hours of the program may be doubled next term to have more educators around campus passing out information. Also, they hope to get yellow jackets that say "Peer Health Educator" on the back to make them more visible to students.

"We're not very recognizable," Columbo said. "We have side backpacks and we just look like students."

Leith added that students who want to get involved in peer education can pick up an application at the health center today.

Contact the crime/ health/safety reporter at lisacatto@dailyemerald.com.

Oregon court prohibits per-signature pay

The decision upheld 2002's Measure 26, which passed by a two-to-one margin

By Nika Carlson

The U.S. District Court of Oregon ruled Wednesday that prohibiting ballot petition circulators from being paid for each signature they gather is constitutional.

In a case that challenged Measure 26, which Oregonians voted in by a two-to-one margin in November 2002, the plaintiffs said the law restricts free speech rights and the right

to petition for grievances.

The law seeks to prevent fraud in the gathering of signatures on petitions. Under the law, petitioners can still be paid an hourly wage.

The plaintiffs, three Oregonians involved in the petition process, said the law restricts their right to political speech by making the petition process prohibitively expensive, inefficient and subject to a higher rate of falsified signatures, according to the judge's opinion statement.

The plaintiffs could not be reached for comment, but they are expected to file an appeal.

Judge Ann Aiken relied heavily on evidence of fraud in signature gathering in her decision, focusing in particular on testimony and cases showing that paying people by the number of signatures they gather is a strong incentive for forging names.

The strong public support for the measure was also evidence that there was an "interest in restoring public confidence" in the ballot measure process, Aiken wrote in her decision.

"This was a very challenging case for the state," said Kevin Neely, spokesman for state Attorney General Hardy Myers. He added that the decision, in which the state was the defendant, was "a very important victory."

"The initiative process has the capacity to create enormous change within the state and our society, and any effort to interfere with that process can have exceptional consequences," he said. "I think the voters decided it was more important to ensure the integrity of that process than a free speech assertion.'

He added that the state asserts the law prevents fraud and doesn't necessarily infringe of free speech.

University Professor Garrett Epps, an expert in constitutional law, said that the case was potentially a landmark one, though he wasn't sure Aiken's decision would stand up on appeal.

"There is, in fact, a matter of free speech," he said.

Epps said he believed and wrote when the measure was passed that it was unconstitutional, saying it involves a "very serious First Amendment interest.

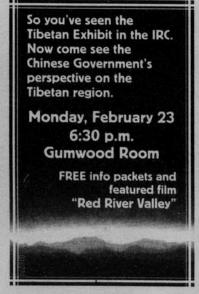
The law is a First Amendment issue because it deals with the way that people spread their political message, he said.

Epps added that the case required

Turn to MEASURE26, page 5









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