

Oregon Daily Emerald

The rampage continues Page 12



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Day of Silence honors plight of LGBTQ youth

About 45 University students and community members spent Wednesday in silent vigil, then marched to South Eugene High School

By Chelsea Duncan
Senior News Reporter

Even though many of the students participating in Wednesday's national Day of Silence had red tape across their mouths, their message against discrimination was loud and clear.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students from the University and local high schools, along with their allies, took a daylong vow of silence to make a statement against harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ youth.

South Eugene High School junior Jordan Enge said the vow of silence and the red duct tape students wore was meant to emphasize the difficulties LGBTQ students face in school and at home.

"That exaggeration shows people how intense it really is," he said, adding that anti-gay sentiments are common at his high school. "We're silent all day, symbolically, but what we're really going to do is try to act to end the silence."

The day is organized nationally by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network in collaboration with the United States Student Association, according to <http://www.dayofsilence.com>. The student-led event was founded in 1996 at the University of Virginia. Since then, the day has become one of the largest student-led actions toward ending discrimination in schools, according to the Web site.

Springfield High School junior Devin McGeehan said the silence was representative of the suppression LGBTQ youth face in speaking out about their sexuality.

"There's a huge portion of the student population who can't express who they are because it's considered socially unacceptable," he said. "The silence kind of symbolizes the silence that queer youth face on a daily basis."

University junior Hanna Persson said LGBTQ students don't always feel safe discussing their sexuality in school environments or at home, which is why the group encourages people to speak openly about the issues.

"I think a lot of people don't necessarily feel safe coming out," he said. "It ends up being a big part of a person's life that they don't talk about."

Persson said the message to speak out against discrimination is particularly important in today's social climate, which has been stirred up by controversies over same-sex marriages.

"People have had homophobic experiences on campus," Persson said.

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Tim Bobosky Photographer

Participants in the national Day of Silence rally march on East 13th Avenue from the University to South Eugene High School. The day commemorates LGBTQ students and the difficulties they face in school and at home.

PLANET PROTECTORS



Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Environmental activist Julia Butterfly Hill took part in the University's Earth Day events Wednesday. Hill spent two years in a tree to protest logging.

HONOR THY MOTHER

Earth Day festivities kick off a day early on campus

By Steven Neuman
News Reporter

The ASUO celebrated an early Earth Day on Wednesday under intermittent rain showers and a patchy gray sky. Volunteers for local environmental organizations huddled around canopied tables, and students, huddling beneath bobbing umbrellas, assembled a recycled mosaic from colorful plastic bottle tops in

the EMU Amphitheater.

"The weather has definitely been an interesting force," ASUO Environmental Relations Coordinator Corey Harmon said. "The earth is telling us that it's alive."

The celebration was, for the most part, a local affair. Booths included exhibits from Eugene Water and Electric Board, Campus and BRING Recycling, the Cascadia Wildlands Project, OSPIRG, Bioneers and Amnesty International.

Events throughout the day included musical performances by the Reed Whorton Band, Rhetoric Tuesday, Eugene Battle of the Bands winner Opie, as well as speeches by different activists.

Although Earth Day is officially on Thursday, Harmon said the celebration was held on Wednesday because of scheduling conflicts for the EMU.

"There were previously planned events Turn to **EARTH DAY**, page 6

Calif. gay marriage moves forward

A bill passed in the state's Judiciary Committee is unlikely to reach full assembly this year

By Ann E. Marimow
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Reinforcing California's contrarian image, the Democrat-controlled Legislature Tuesday took the first step toward legalizing gay marriage at a time when many states seek to ban it.

Gay rights advocates hailed the 8 to 3 vote by the Assembly Judiciary Committee as a historic civil rights victory, even as they conceded the bill is a long shot for passage this year. Democrats favored the bill; Republicans opposed it.

The move made California's Legislature

the first in the nation to register any official support for a gay marriage bill, proponents said.

Assemblyman Mark Leno, the bill's author, made a passionate plea to the committee not to treat him as a second-class citizen because he is gay.

"By denying marriage, you are implying there is something inherently inferior and unstable about the way that I love and that's just wrong," said Leno, D-San Francisco.

Opponents of the measure said it would undermine the traditional definition of marriage and flout a voter-backed initiative four years ago that defined marriage as between a man and a woman.

"This bill is illegitimate, it is unconstitutional and it is immoral," said Randy Thomasson of the Campaign for California Families.

It is considered unlikely that Leno's bill will reach the full Assembly this year. Proponents had to press legislative leaders for weeks to get a hearing.

Leno's bill would rewrite state law to define marriage as between "two persons" instead of between a man and a woman. The key issue is whether Leno's effort would violate another section of state law created by Proposition 22, which 61 percent of voters approved in 2000. The dispute centers on the intent and interpretation of that initiative.

To opponents of gay marriage, the measure defined marriage in California as between a man and a woman.

But gay-marriage proponents said Proposition 22 was narrowly designed to prohibit California from recognizing

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