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## Editorial

# Code not only step to transgender tolerance

Adding gender identity or gender orientation to the Eugene anti-discrimination code is an important progressive step in providing fair access to housing and employment for everyone. Discrimination based on gender, including gender identity, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It is that simple. The Emerald urges City Council members to pass this ordinance and expand civil rights protections to the transgender community.

There are at least 100 transgender people in Eugene, according to city estimates. The ordinance will mean real changes in their lives. The ordinance would also serve a symbolic purpose, helping to remove the stigma attached to the transgender lifestyle.

Unfounded fears of transgender people using public restrooms continue to dominate the discussion and prove there are plenty of misconceptions, as well as trans-phobia, in the public. The University has included gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy without incident. Eugene will be no different. We are glad the Eugene Human Rights Commission plans on holding community dialogues to begin to address these issues.

The ordinance is a great idea. But the best way to ensure the safety and security of transgender people in our community is for all of us to begin to confront and deal with our own feelings of fear. We must educate ourselves about this issue if we want to create a truly welcoming environment for all people.

The ASUO Constitutional Court's rejection Tuesday of University sophomore Silas Snider's request to begin collecting signatures for a recall of a large number of ASUO officials, including the executive and several senators, brings to light a few issues.

First and foremost, the court's decision rests on some limp legal excuses. Rather than dealing with the request in a legitimate and serious manner, they rejected it on the basis of a technicality.

Saying the request "does not conform to the requirements of bringing a matter before the Court" because Snider was unaware he was required to specifically give instances of what the court claimed were "alleged incidents that occurred at the Sunriver retreat" is hardly a courageous action. The court was well aware of the events Snider was referencing, and, incidentally, when the ASUO admits in a public statement that retreat members broke the law, such actions are no longer "alleged."

Second, Snider's attempt was a well-intentioned but misguided crusade. While we cannot say in good conscience that we disagree with the logic behind Snider's attempt — after all, we have also called for their resignation in the past — it was also completely unrealistic.

In a government system where an elected term for almost every major position lasts a single year, the energy Snider expended would have had little effect. Even if the court had ruled in his favor and he had gathered the necessary signatures, a recall election would have probably conflicted with the next regular election cycle and would have been pointless.

Snider and his fellow like-minded students should realize their best opportunity to effect change within the ASUO is to get involved in elections and urge the participation of the student body. Mobilize voters or run for office, because when students elect the right leaders, recall elections are unneeded.

## In my opinion

# Love knows no bounds

After all the chocolate, after all the cards, after we've all been made psychologically sick from the diamond advertisements and physically sick from Sweethearts, love remains. Valentine's Day passes, and we live on. Somehow. Bleh.

As someone lacking a significant other, I've been thinking a lot about love lately. Valentine's Day is always a bit difficult for us singles, even the cynical ones who don't buy into traditional, bourgeois Hallmark crap. Try to open a door for me, and I'll rearrange your kneecaps — does my arm really look that weak to you? Natural skepticism makes me see my lover-bird friends and ask: As hard as I am, is it possible for me to be capable of that soft, googly-eyed simpering?

I can acknowledge love exists; that's a start. It's the magnetic feeling between two people that keeps them together like taffy. It's a jaw-breaking force that seems to make spending time with my friends more difficult than it needs to be, the third wheel on a very sexy bicycle.

Unlike many people, I believe that love can happen regardless of gender and that no law, no matter how hateful, can strip it away. Not that the legal system should even have the power to do so in the first place. Apparently, it's not enough for the states to continue to march insensitive policies forward. President Bush in his State of the Union address demanded a constitutional amendment to separate straight and queer.

But there is progress on some fronts. In New York, yet another court challenge succeeded in its attempts to make gay marriage legal by judicial fiat. I love the intent; I just wish such dictates lasted longer than the moment taken by the populace to



JENNIFER MCBRIDE  
QUASHING DISSENT

slap down the idea of freedom to love. Apparently, the reason the law exists is so closed-minded men and women can use it as a tool to tyrannically maintain their comfort zones. They would shove valid feelings back into the darkness just to ensure Britney Spears has some kind of sanctity the next time she pops down to Vegas. What ever happened to social contract theory? Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? When did sexuality become a threat necessary for Big Brother to control?

Society keeps making closets. Big closets, small closets. We each have to play a predestinated role to one extent or another. Anything that might scare the general population must be silenced and shattered. For this reason, transsexuals have limited protection under the law. In most states and cities, employers are allowed to fire an employee if they find out he or she is transgendered. Karen Frances Ulane was a pilot at Eastern Airlines who was fired because her gender change might have reflected badly on the corporate image. In 20 years, one might hope such restrictive mindsets would have changed, but just five years ago teacher Dana Rivers, after teaching nine years at a Sacramento high school, was fired because her planned gender operation would distract from an educational atmosphere. Eugene itself has not fully addressed the transgender

community, still tied up on the minutia of bathrooms. As if a "not intended for your gender" sign is sufficient to stop sexual predators.

Love is also inextricably linked to its inverse: anger. In many states, murder is still considered a reasonable response to finding your wife in bed with another. In January, Jimmy Dean Watkins received a sentence of only four months in prison for murdering his wife. His blind fury was apparently excuse enough for killing a woman. Crimes of passion have long been a staple of our legal system, but I'd have hoped by now that the anachronism would be confined to "Days of our Lives". Can you picture a woman walking in on her cheating husband, stabbing him and getting away with it at a jury trial? It would never happen. You see, women are so used to being hysterical all the time (a result of their inherent biological frailty), they should have learned how to control themselves. Men, on the other hand, are so used to being big, strong paragons of brawniness that whenever emotions cross their otherwise rational brains, they are so startled they temporarily lose control, the poor babies.

You know who's really hysterical? I am, but not from my femininity. It's called being desperate. The last person who asked me out on a date was somebody's mother. Even so, I have a little hope in this cold, hard heart. He or she better have a sense of humor though, that's for sure.

Do you know what love really is? Having a Greek pizza delivered straight to your couch during a "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" marathon. Now that's romance.

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