

Homophobe on the rampage

by Billy Russo

"Two weeks ago at an MCC Service Billy Russo threatened to kill me," the defendant told the judge. He went on to explain that, although he, himself, is not homosexual, he was the victim of a homosexual conspiracy that centered around MCC Roseburg and the Gay And Lesbian Alliance (GALA), adding that Russo is treasurer of both organizations. He stated that members of the local homosexual community have stolen almost everything he owned and that the rest of the homosexuals helped cover it up.

The defendant conveniently left out the fact that the man who actually stole his pro-

perty was a transient he had picked up at a public toilet in Los Angeles. The defendant brought the transient back to Roseburg with him, and they lived as lovers for a week or two before the transient skipped town with his belongings.

That's when the trouble started. Unable — or unwilling — to deal with the reality of the situation the defendant lashed out at everyone around him.

First the defendant broke into a storage locker belonging to the woman who gave his transient ex-lover a ride to New Mexico. He stole or trashed everything in the locker.

Shortly thereafter he burglarized the home of another gay man who he claimed "owed"

aware of the burglary). So he took out the brunt of his hostility and frustration on her.

He started making harrasing phone calls at all hours. She eventually had her phone number changed. So he started ringing her door buzzer in the middle of the night.

Earlier in the week of the hearing the defendant spent the night in jail for breaking down her door. And at the time of his arrest he threatened her with bodily harm.

Meanwhile two other gay men also reported him to the police for burglary and harrasment. The police made their reports, but up until the time he broke down the Switchboard Counselor's door, they took no action.

During the middle of July the defendant asked me to intervene in his behalf with the people he was harrasing. In a moment of anger I criticized him severely for his actions. Within 48 hours the police intruded upon my space with a helicopter. In the confrontation that pursued, the deputies admitted that they were acting on a tip from this same individual that I was operating a marijuana plantation.

Another woman and her two witnesses claimed that he tried to run them off the road with his pickup. Again, the police could do nothing.

At the July GALA meeting I wanted to file a grievance against this man. Other GALA members expressed the concern that if we stand up to him, he'll identify more closeted members of our community to the authorities. During the three years he has been involved in the local community he has participated in many GALA activities where he has met just about everyone. And he has repeatedly demonstrated that he is easily provoked.

He showed up at that meeting late — he's a GALA member — and weeping big tears he asked the community for forgiveness. I didn't pursue the grievance.

During the next month he intensified his harrassment of select members of the community. He made many harrasing phone calls to a dozen different gay and lesbian residents. He used his pickup also: roaring into driveways in the middle of the night, shouting threats and honking his horn.

While all this was going on, I tried to get him to focus some of that hostility my way. I confronted him repeatedly, accusing him of acting like a vindictive five-year-old and not having enough courage and self-respect to face those he claims to have differences with. It did no good.

At the August GALA meeting I introduced my motion, invoking the grievance procedure against him. It passed.

The following weekend he was arrested after breaking down the switchboard counselor's door. That Monday he pled guilty to the three charges which resulted from this act. The judge sentenced him to time served and released him.

Later that morning, accompanied by three women and two girls, I initiated proceedings in circuit court to have him committed. A warrant was issued, and he was arrested again. It was during this proceeding that he dragged my good name through the mud. And besides denying his homosexuality, he assured the judge that he intended to leave the area immediately after the hearing, never to associate with these homosexuals again, and that he would return to his former religion: the Mormon church. After hearing the opinions of various members of the mental health community, this judge also let him go.

He is now residing in Eugene where he will surely get involved with the homophile community there. He also travels to Portland and numbers a few gay men among his acquaintances. The Roseburg homophile community breathes a sigh of relief.



The Roseburg Report

him and then proceeded to notify the police that the man was growing marijuana in his home.

At that point a GALA switchboard counselor criticized him for exposing the above-mentioned man to the police (she wasn't

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8:00 pm \$3

Mon. 14th OPEN MIKE with M.C. Candy Carr.
Audition for shows at the P.D.!! 8:00 pm

Wed. 16th SUSAN ARROW and the Quivers
Earth music with Witch Extraordinaire!!
8:00 pm \$3

Wed. 23 Jane Howard 8:00 pm \$3

Wed. 30 1st Annual HALLOWEEN SOCK HOP
at the P.D.!! \$1 Cover

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Sock Hop

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