

just news

Anti-violence reporting line

A method to record data on hate crimes should help encourage gays and lesbians to report homophobic violence

by Inga Sorensen

Lesbians and gays in Oregon can now dial a queer-run reporting line to report bias crimes. The newly-created project—officially known as the Homophobic Violence Reporting Line—is sponsored by the Lesbian Community Project, and according to LCP Executive Director Donna Red Wing, is primarily designed to encourage lesbians and gays to report hate crimes, but it serves several other purposes as well.

"The line will initially act as a voice mail. It will give information including phone numbers for the Portland Police Bureau, Victim's Assistance, and numbers that will connect them to counselors. It will also ask people to leave a name and number so we can get back to them quickly. We're also hoping to document this information because it's vital we not just have the statistics but have the anecdotal information as well." Unlike other hotlines a full time staff member will not be available. Instead a volunteer will return phone calls as quickly as possible, explains Red Wing.

Red Wing maintains it's critical that gays know there's a place they can turn, and people they can trust, if they've been the victim of a hate crime. "It's important that people know we have a very strict confidentiality mandate and that they can feel safe leaving their name and telephone number. We'll also be giving callers a choice of whether they want a woman or man to return their call. Some people don't care, but if a woman has been violated by a man, she probably doesn't want a guy to return her call even if he's gay. Likewise, if a gay man has been bashed, he may want to talk to another man. We'll be giving people that option," she says.

According to Red Wing, the line is currently "more a reporting line than a crisis intervention line." She stresses, however, that there will be people trained in crisis intervention ready to respond. Twenty people are currently involved in the project—all on a volunteer basis. Others interested in applying are encouraged to contact Red Wing at the LCP. Prospective volunteers will be put through a "really tough screening process," says Red Wing, to ensure they're equipped to handle the job. During their four to eight hour

shifts, volunteers are required to call into the line to retrieve messages "every couple of hours" and then return the phone calls. Red Wing says, "When we call people back we first listen to what they have to say and then we let them know what their options are, including doing nothing at all but talk to us...many times people call us to simply tell us what happened to them. They're very eager to talk about it."

The next step is to document the information. "We want people to first feel safe and comfortable. We'll then be asking them questions about the incident and documenting the information," explains Red Wing. "We ensure the strictest confidentiality and will only put the person's initials on the report. No information that could identify the person will be put in the report and we feel it's very important people know that."

Every six months LCP will publish a summary of reports made to the line—including not only the number of calls, but also the details of the cases, minus names and any details that could lead to the identity of the person. Red Wing says that information will be shared with the Portland Police Bureau's Bias and Hate Crime Unit, the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, as well as city and state officials. "It's very important that people realize just how widespread this problem is. This will help prove that the problem does exist and that we all need to do something about it."

LCP has received two grants—one from the MS foundation and another from the Fred Meyer Foundation—to help with the project's start-up costs. LCP will be covering the rest of the costs, including the printing and distribution of thousands of fluorescent stickers with the reporting line number on them. "The stickers will be placed all over the city, including bathrooms and telephone booths," says Red Wing.

At the end of three months the system will be reviewed and hopefully expanded. "We'd like to include information about the intimidation law, as well as other referrals," she adds.

The Homophobic Violence Reporting Line number will not be available until July 1. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer or accessing the number, should contact the Lesbian Community Project at 223-0071.

ALL NEW HARTS MOVIE ARCADE

Designed for Cruising

330 SW 3rd Ave.,

(Stark & 3rd)

GAY BOOKS
MAGS TAPES

*Present this ad for
\$2.00 in arcade tokens*

224-2338

Open at 11 am



A unique environment featuring a wide variety of entertainment, astounding international vaudeville, quality crafts, delicious food and an exceptional spirit of community.

Near Veneta, 13 miles west of Eugene
Visit the Left Bank!

**JULY
12, 13 & 14**

11:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Friday Admission.....\$6

Saturday Admission.....\$8

Sunday Admission.....\$7

12 years & under FREE!

55 years & better 1/2 price!



TAKE THE BUS

From The Lane County

Fair Grounds

IT'S FREE!



NO dogs on property
NO public camping
NO video cameras

For more information
call 343-4298

Art by Jeanne Ann Strope

celebrate lesbian and gay pride

WHEEL ALIGNMENT TIRES

Ferguson
AUTOBODY & PAINT

2454 E. Burnside
232-3600

FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1952

we've moved



Our new address is:

4016 NE FREMONT

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1991



281-7831
same phone number

**GARY
LUCKEY**