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INSULATED WINDOW CORPORATION

NORTHWEST news

Continued from Page 7

Each year more than 100 activists from around the state gather together to talk about past successes and the occasional small failure, to strategize for the future and simply to enjoy the company of friends and allies. The 2002 theme is "Advancing Democracy, Celebrating Leadership: 10 Years and Counting."

Ramon Ramirez, Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United president, will be the keynote speaker. In honor of Earth Day, ROP will distribute "Seeds of Democracy" packets containing tools for growing justice.

Workshops will focus on the upcoming elections and how to use events to promote education and turn the tables on political candidates. Entertainment will be provided by the Southern Oregon Cloggers.

The caucus registration fee, which includes a breakfast bar and lunch, is \$20 for ROP members and \$25 for nonmembers. The price goes down if three or more members of a group attend and if they register by April 9.

For information about registration, child care, travel stipends and housing, call 503-543-8417 or e-mail office@rop.org.

WEB BLOCKING ON TRIAL

In a nine-day trial that started March 25 before the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, the American Civil Liberties Union presented testimony from librarians, patrons, Web site authors and technology experts to explain why a federal law passed in December 2000 that forces libraries to censor constitutionally protected speech online should be struck down permanently.

The Children's Internet Protection Act ties funding to the mandated use of blocking programs on Internet terminals used by both adults and minors in public libraries. "Librarians are uniquely qualified to teach library patrons how to find the content they want and avoid inappropriate content without the government trying to deputize them into the thought police," said Ann Beeson, a member of the ACLU legal team.

Emma Rood, a lesbian teen from Portland, is one of the library patrons suing the federal government. Other clients include a 15-year-old African American girl and her aunt, who do not have Internet access at home in Philadelphia; two congressional candidates whose Web sites were blocked; PlanetOut.com, a leading site for sexual minorities; and Planned Parenthood Federation of America, whose site provides reproductive health care information.

Long before blocking programs ever became an issue, libraries have made it their mission to help people find exactly the information they need, whether it is online or on paper. But "the law makes it impossible for us to do our jobs," said Ginie Cooper, Multnomah County Library director, who testified March 25.

Nonetheless, libraries now must install

"blocking technology measures" or forfeit federal funds. The law defines such measures as "a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access" such as the commercially available programs X-Stop and CyberPatrol.

The ACLU also presented testimony from experts to prove the software irrationally and arbitrarily censors constitutionally protected speech. Examples of sites that were blocked after erroneously being identified as having sexually explicit or pornographic content: www.the-strippers.com (a wood varnish removal service), www.redhotmama.com (a California event planner), www.muchlove.org (an animal rescue organization) and www.cancerfrt.wkmc.com (a hospital radiation oncology department).

"The flaws in blocking programs are not a matter of individual flaws in individual products; they are inevitable given the task and the limitations of the technology," said Chris Hansen, an ACLU senior staff attorney. "Everyone from a congressional panel to *Consumer Reports* to parents have found blocking programs to be unworkable."

In contrast, librarians already use their professional skills to help patrons who access the Internet. Such methods include establishing policies prohibiting access to illegal content; the use of handouts, online guides, training sessions and recommended Web pages; providing terminals with optional rather than mandatory blocking software; and the use of wraparound privacy screens to maintain a nonthreatening environment.

The American Library Association has filed a similar suit on behalf of its members; the court has



Thanks to the ACLU, lesbian teen Emma Rood finally is getting her day in court

consolidated the two cases. Any appeal of the decision will go straight to the U.S. Supreme Court, which is required to hear challenges to this law.

CHIEF'S FORUM HONORS OFFICER

The Portland Police Bureau Chief's Forum presented its annual community policing awards April 1. The citations were developed to acknowledge civilians, organizations and employees for their contributions.

Detective Sgt. David Yamasaki received a Certificate of Appreciation "for his work with minority groups and the positive way he performs his duties." According to Norm Costa of the Sexual Minorities Roundtable, the police officer was honored for his work with the queer community in investigating bias crimes.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS