

FACE OFF

Curfew keeps youngsters safe, secure

DAISY BAIN
A & E Editor

Oregon Revised Statute 419C.680 says: 1. No minor shall be in or upon any street, highway, park, alley or other public place between the hours of 12 midnight and 4 a.m. of the following morning, unless: Such minor is accompanied by a parent, guardian or other person 18 years of age or over and authorized by the parent; or such minor is then engaged in a lawful pursuit or activity which requires the presence of the minor in such public places during these hours; or the minor is legally emancipated.

Each county in Oregon has its own curfew laws that comply with the state law and are enforced heavily by local police officers with good reason. Parents have every right to discipline and award their children any way they see fit. If they trust their children enough to be away from home after midnight, that's great! But just because they are away from home does not mean they have to be outside, in a public place that strictly is prohibited by law. The law is not there to restrict parents or teens from their freedoms. It is there to protect the community from harm.

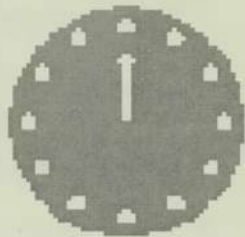
In 1999, Clackamas County had 454 reported sex crimes with only 77 actual arrests, according to the Clackamas County Oregon Uniform Crime Report. Which means there are still a possible 377 sex offenders roaming the streets. Most of who are probably just waiting for an innocent victim to be on the

streets in the twilight hours of the evening. There were also 52 reported kidnapping cases in Clackamas County. Only three arrests were made in 1999. With those figures alone, how could you not want today's children within closed doors?

The curfew law is also enforced to help parents with uncontrollable teens. Too many times I have seen my friends get into fights with their parents that result in the kid running away, even if only for a few hours. To a parent, a few hours feels like an eternity.

Drug use is a problem communities in Oregon face as a whole. The easiest way to fight drugs is to start young. The longer you can keep kids off the streets, the better chance we have as a community to keep them away from the drug pushers who we all know lurk the alleys in the middle of the night.

The second amendment promises our right to peacefully assemble, so why can't teens assemble somewhere indoors? My right as a resident in a community is to know that I can sleep at night knowing that my 13 and 17-year old sisters are safe. If the law helps to enforce a fear factor in their heads, then I say great. The more they fear going out late, the less inclined they would be going out late. I don't want my sisters to be the next statistic I read about while researching for this paper. I commend the students who wish to challenge the curfew laws in the courts, but we can take faith in the system.



Curfew laws need to be reconsidered

LUKE MAHAN
Staff Writer

"This doesn't affect me, so I don't care." "I had to go through it, so they should too." These types of attitudes are taken far too often in regard to issues such as the environment, foreign policy and in this case, curfew laws.

Almost every time I convey my opposition to these unconstitutional laws, I am promptly supplied with a response similar to "You're 18, why do you care?" Only a month ago was I liberated from the 11 p.m. constraint set by the Gladstone authorities. Until I turned 18, I was often pulled over for merely walking to a friend's house, or conversing on the sidewalk with cronies after a long day at work. However, even though I am now 18, I do not go without run-ins with officials who suspect me to be underage. Underage? You'd think I was drinking or trying to get into a nudie-bar. Alas, my only crime was being outside.

Aside from the obvious logical and rational flaws (including the fact that most adolescents can't even go to the local 7-Eleven to get a midnight snack), curfew laws include more serious ramifications.

These locally regulated ordinances undermine parents' ability to set their own rules for their children. If parents allow their children to be off their property after any given time, that decision should be respected. I am surprised that parents have let local governments

control limits they should be setting themselves.

Another argument against curfew is the second amendment to the Constitution, which promises our right to peacefully assemble. Shouldn't this right be available at any time and not just when local law-enforcement says we can? We should be allowed to assemble peacefully not just before 11 p.m. or 12 a.m., and not just after we turn a certain age. I am sure there are some assemblies with non-peaceful intentions, but I am also sure these cases are in the minority. In honesty, it is a small percentage of people who are committing illegal acts "after hours" who are thereby ruining everyone else's fun.

I suppose my problem is being all theory and no action, so I consider writing this article my action; at least I'm bringing up the issue, which no one seems to consider very often. A Clackamas student named David Scheidegger has hopes to take the fight further by challenging the law in the courts.

"By not fighting this law, we are setting a precedent that we will let any unjust law made by the legislators and bureaucrats go unchecked," said Scheidegger. His efforts will hopefully open the eyes of voters who don't realize that the very people the law affects have no say in the matter.

I happen to be concerned about the freedoms of future generations and not just my own.

Do you think there should be a curfew for people under 18?



Scott Hunter

Major: Undecided

"No. It should be up to them to make their own choices."



Kyle Shali

Major: 2 Year Transfer

"No. I just think if the parents raised them up right they shouldn't have to worry about curfews."

Photos and quotes compiled by Salena De La Cruz and Maggie Jirasek



Ray Kauffman

Major: Construction Management

"It depends on the parents."



Prince Brown

Major: Undecided

"Hell, no. I would say sixteen to seventeen is alright. My mom let me stay out as much as I want when I was sixteen to seventeen. It was cool. Under that, I understand."



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