

METROPOLITAN

City Council votes no Lu's license

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—An entrenchment of marijuana peddlers held a local tavern hostage, along with the surrounding neighborhood, and turned a busy intersection into a drug drive-in.

The open drug activity in front of Lu's Higher Ground, (registered as Mom's Higher Ground and located at 1 N. Killingsworth), soured neighborhood groups, who organized against the tavern. On December 29, the City Council recommended to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission that the liquor license not be renewed.

Regardless of how the Council ruled, Lu's has been closing down for the last 13 months. The problem that would not go away still thrives at that intersection, but the Bain family has lost their business. They closed their tavern on Dec. 1st.

What happened? How did community groups play a part in this issue and what can businesses do in the future to prevent vice from becoming a cancer on their businesses?

According to Vernon Ambus, former bartender and manager of Lu's, the environment of any tavern is open to all elements of society.

"Bar owners may have a tendency to overlook certain things. In Lu's case it was his tolerance towards a certain group. He thought they would just go away but they didn't."

The increasing demand from a public willing to pay \$10 for a gram bag of weed (small portions of marijuana equaling four to six joints) validated the doorsteps of Lu's as a drug drive-in. The gram bag has become the standard street purchase for marijuana. It replaced the matchbox which was the norm during the early '70s.

Mayor Frank Ivancie, along with Ambus, stated that the decriminalization of marijuana laws helped create this situation. In accepting State Rep. Ed Leek's testimony against license renewal Ivancie asked Leek to consider legislation that would prevent a situation like this from ever developing again.

Ambus said neighborhood groups who fought to close Lu's down should spearhead legislation to protect businesses from vice taking

over.

"The situation you had at Lu's is like the one you had down at the Post Office downtown and Fred Meyer's on S.W. Fifth. No one petitioned to close Fred Meyer's. The authorities responded by beefing up the Transit Police.

"The police could have written tickets to keep those cats tied up in court. The police didn't want to do all that paperwork. So, they would come to the corner, pour the stuff out, and go on about their business."

The recommendation for denial of a liquor license was a victory for neighborhood groups who organized to protest the tavern.

Madeline Noshub, of the Humboldt Neighborhood Association, said they first noticed the problem in 1979. "We met with the owners after we noticed the congestion. We looked into the timing of traffic lights and other reasons for the problem."

After two years Noshub said they were not getting anywhere with mediation and spearheaded a campaign to deny Lu's liquor license.

She also expressed annoyance at the closing being viewed as "racial."

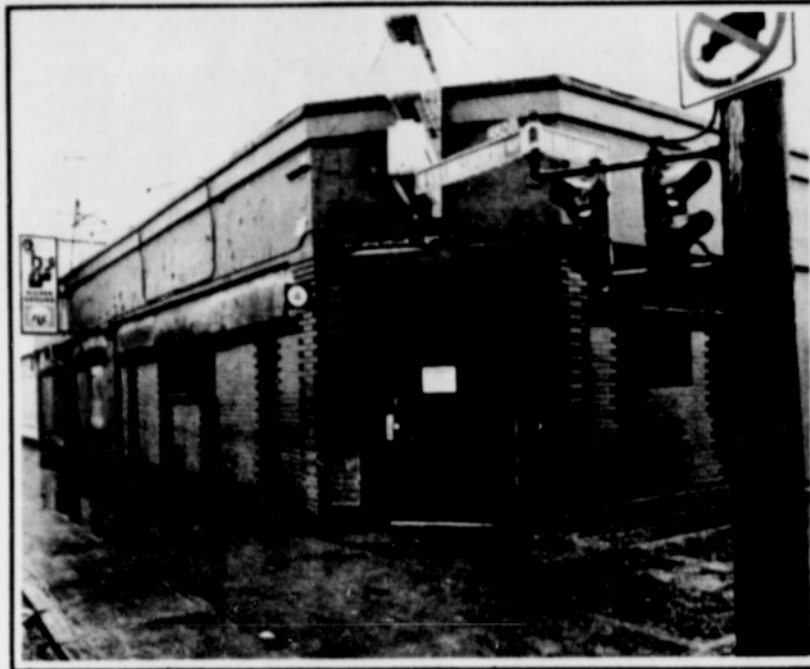
"It was not a white or Black problem. It was a neighborhood problem. It was only a coincidence that the people who showed up to testify against the tavern were all white."

Socially, it is easier for whites to stand up and mount protest against Lu's. Blacks in the area have a higher chance of being intimidated by those who wanted Lu's left alone. They are likely to run into these people at the store, walking down the street or over at someone's house.

Nevertheless, Ann Witte, attorney for Margaret Bain, Lu's mother, felt race had something to do with it. "If it is a neighborhood association in a Black neighborhood, why is it all white?"

Noshub said the neighborhood association was not all white and the drug traffic had Blacks angry, too.

How do you prevent vice from taking over? Ambus said to enforce loitering laws. "If Portland had a loitering law, two of the victimless crimes assaulting the Black community—drugs and prostitution—



The Portland City Council voted last week to recommend to the OLCC that the liquor license for Lu's Higher Ground not be renewed. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

could be dealt with."

Charles B. Maxey, agent of the Union Avenue Liquor Store, and former owner of a grocery store, said consistency and respect for all parties involved, kept vice from creeping up and taking over his business.

In 1980 the Union Avenue Liquor Store was in the middle of a continuous prostitution problem. Yet, the girls never waved anyone down in front of his building or on the same block.

"I recognized them as human beings, and they in turn recognized me as a legitimate businessman. When they came around they respected my wishes not to operate their illegitimate business around my legitimate business."

Maxey said vice starts out with business owners trying to advance their own personal wealth at the expense of their legitimate customers.

"If you buy stolen goods, drugs or girls you open the door for these

elements to take control. You invite the situation in without even knowing it."

Willie Harris, former owner of the tavern before it became Lu's Higher Ground, said he would never let dealers or vice get comfortable. "You don't wait around or try to pretend it does not exist. You let them know from the very beginning where you stand."

At the City Council hearing Commissioner Charles Jordan said that the record will show that he tried to advocate time for Mrs. Bain to solve the problem.

"But in light of the evidence, I have nowhere else to go. You can delegate authority but you cannot delegate responsibility." The City Council voted unanimously not to renew the tavern's liquor license.

Witte said the OLCC was not bound by the Council's recommendation. "If they follow it we plan to appeal."

Paul Knauls, sales representative, stands between a 1929 model-A replica (not for sale) and a 1984 Thunderbird (for sale now at Lynn Kirby Coliseum Ford).

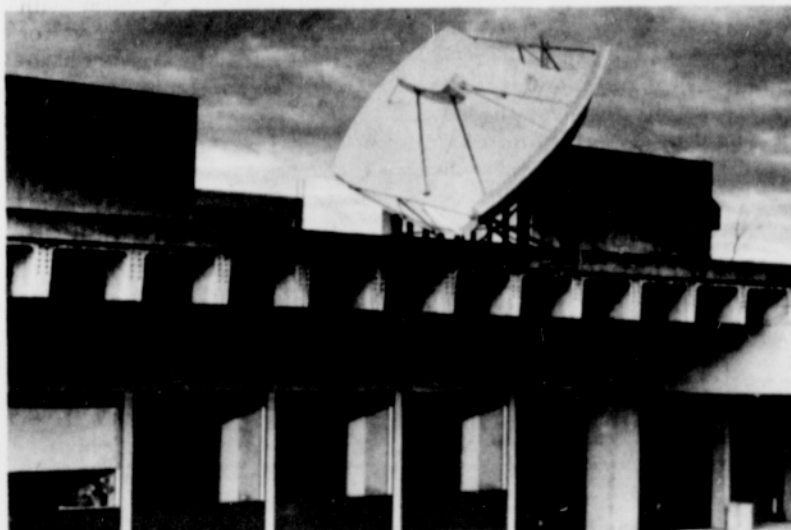
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Satellite receiving dish located atop the College Center Building at Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus measures 24 x 28 feet and weighs over 4,000 pounds.

PCC offers video conferencing service

Portland Community College has joined a college network serving the top 60 markets in the United States with the recent installation of a huge 4,000 pound, 24 x 28 foot fiberglass dish. Now mounted atop the College Center Building at PCC's Sylvania Campus, the satellite earth station receiving dish is large enough to simultaneously receive transmission from all domestic satellites now in operation.

According to Ray Pirkel, director of Instructional Support Services at PCC, the receiving dish was installed to serve two major purposes. "It will bring informational services previously not available to college staff, students and the general public," said Pirkel. "And the college will derive some income from the project."

Video-conferencing under the Campus Conferencing Network (cCN) will be the major use of the receiving dish and the one that will

ing to Pirkel. As the only CCN franchise in the area, PCC will market its services to area organizations and to groups in town for conferences and conventions.

A second use, according to Pirkel, is video-conferencing of an educational nature, that is, conferencing with other institutions of higher learning.

Training programs for business and industry, transmission of additional telecourses and peripheral special programming will also be available because of the dish, Pirkel said.

Video-conferencing is only available at the Sylvania Campus at this time. "Eventually Sylvania will be connected by cable so every campus will be able to receive," Pirkel said. The dish has receiving capabilities only as far as the video portion is concerned. However, with two-way audio, viewers can participate in a conference broadcast.

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