

Judge orders Bridge to publish abortion ad

By DAN RODGERS

Staff Writer, The Bridge

In a decision that could affect student newspapers across the nation, a U.S. District Court judge ruled Sept. 9, that The Bridge must run a pro-abortion advertisement it refused to run in 1979 and 1980.

"We think it has national significance," said Stevie Remington, executive director of the Oregon chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. "I think it would apply to high school papers."

"It's very scary," said Mary Howard, the Lake Oswego High School newspaper counselor.

"It could mean that any school paper supported by public funds is obligated to take any ad that comes along," said Jim Magmer, Sylvania journalism instructor.

"This is not only a victory for freedom of speech, but is also a victory for reproductive control for women," said a spokesperson for the Portland Women's Health Center.

But Judge Robert Belloni held that a

publicly-funded school newspaper is a "public forum. (I)t may not select which issues are worth discussing or debating in public facilities. . .government must afford all points of view an equal opportunity to be heard."

In October 1979, the non-profit Portland Women's Health Center attempted to place an advertisement with The Bridge offering various health-related services, including abortion. "The advertising was truthful and did not advocate illegal or disruptive activity," wrote Judge Belloni.

"The issue then was being debated in the

community," said Magmer.

Advertising such a controversial service might have been construed as "putting the paper and the college on one side of the issue," Magmer said, so he and the student editors decided not to carry advertisements either for or against abortion.

"Discussion in editorials is one thing," he said, "but offering abortion as a service through an ad is quite another."

The Women's Health Center appealed the advertising policy to the PCC administration. The policy was upheld. In June 1980, backed by the ACLU, the Center sued PCC.