

It never rains in (Eastern) Oregon

Tired of the rain? Looking ahead to the hay fever season with horror and resignation? Bored with the bilious green climate of Eugene where even the fenceposts sprout?

Look east. Look to Oregon's high desert country, out where distances are not counted in miles but in "looks" — where you count the horizons you have to cross to get anywhere. Consider the Malheur Environmental Field Station (MEFS) for a camping trip, for birdwatching, for having a hot springs all to yourself for a whole weekend, for earning credits toward your degree.

The MEFS is 32 miles south of Burns in Harney County, a county larger than seven of these United States. The center is a former Job Corps facility now owned by a consortium of 18 Oregon schools and located on the western edge of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near the Steens Mountains.

The first White settlers came to Harney County ten years after Oregon became a state. With rainfall of only 9-12 inches per year and winter temperatures below freezing for days at a time, it's easy to understand why. It's volcano country — a local lava flow is only 400 years old. It's also dry lake country, with miles of salt flats. There are people in Harney County, one to each 960 acres, but the land is hostile to strangers and campers. The MEFS is a home for travelers, biologists, ornithologists, students, and other desert freaks.

The nearby Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has 264 species of birds, one of the largest avian concentrations in the west. There are 53 species of mammals, but there is no accurate count of the mosquito population. Scientists study the animals, including antelope and coyote, in their native habitats.

Two new species of fish have been discovered near the MEFS in the past two years. A Portland State student found a previously unknown fish in one of the lava tube caves, for example, during her visit to the MEFS in 1972. More discoveries no doubt remain to be made.

During the summer school session of 1973, the MEFS will offer 22 courses for credit through Pacific University. All courses are out-of-doors and will involve field study and overnight camping in the desert. The courses will be taught by visiting professors from several Oregon colleges and universities and by faculty from other regions of the country.

A brochure about the summer program can be obtained from David White, Rm. 204 Science I, or from Denzel Ferguson, Director of the Malheur Environmental Field Station, P.O. Box 989, Burns, Oregon 97720. Some assistantships are available.

Math department offers break from dull classes

Do mathematics courses interest you less than corn-fed hog statistics from Dubuque, Iowa? are you unaware of the difference between Calculus and Calciferous? Can you remember anything from the Math 104 class you had last year?

Well if you can't, don't despair, because the University's mathematics department may be able to give you some shelter yet.

The people over in the basement of Deady Hall have come up with a half dozen new courses during the past couple of years which are innovative, interesting, and open to almost anybody who can count to a hundred.

By CHARLES HOLZHAUER
Of the Emerald

The courses were conceived in an effort to offer an alternative to the three term sequence pattern, usually taken by students faced with the science-math group requirements.

Charles Curtis, head of the department, explains that the courses represent an attempt to give a student a broad, general introduction to mathematics, as an alternative to the "cumulative approach."

The courses are in Probability, Counting, Symmetry, Game Theory, Mathematical Milestones and Statistics. Usually two or three are offered each term, on a rotating basis.

The Counting course (which could teach you how to estimate the size of a crowd, your chances of drawing the Jack of Diamonds, or the volume of water flowing down the McKenzie) wasn't too popular at first. "We called in 'Combinatorics,'" explained Curtis. "Nobody would touch it. So we changed the name to 'Counting,' and now the class is full."

The Mathematical Milestones course takes an untechnical historic look at the development of mathematical thinking.

The Symmetry Course can be vitally helpful to students majoring in architecture, chemistry or biology. In this class students learn to understand and describe in mathematical terms the symmetry which occurs in nature: the symmetry of a quartz crystal, a snowflake, or a seashell.

The big crowd puller is the Game Theory class. This class explores the new concept of mathematical analysis of strategy. It has been found that by making a close study of the rules of a given game, and by separating the psychological factors from the strategic factors, a strategy can be worked up that will win that game. "It's like working your way through a pyramid," said Curtis.

"A bunch of fellows at MIT were playing around with this idea. After a while they worked up a strategy for Blackjack. They got some backing and went out to Las Vegas. And they started winning. The casino owners had to start changing the rules."

Enrollment in the Game Theory course, as in the others, has just about doubled since it was first offered in the fall of 1971.

Curtis stresses that all of these courses are open to anyone who has passed Math 95, and that none of them are sequential.

The department also offers a special seminar course for students who arrive at the University with an especially weak background in math. Entitled Math 290, the class allows a student to advance at his own rate. Students who complete this course can then move on to other courses they might formerly have been unable to handle.

Many of these new courses were instigated as a result of student demands for re-organization of group requirements. Now that they are being offered, everybody seems enthusiastic.

Grattan Kerans: former ODE editor 'makes good'

By SCOTT SPITTAL
Of the Emerald

Salem (SPECIAL) — You could title this story "Grattan Kerans — a former Emerald editor makes good." (We did).

You see, Kerans is an ex-editor of the Emerald ('70-71, to be exact). And, depending on whatever you value, he probably has made it good — as the administrative assistant for the Joint Special Committee on Professional Responsibility way up in beautiful downtown Salem.

But whether or not what Kerans makes is good or not depends on the judgement of the committee, and the value of the Legislation he helps create.

What Kerans makes for the committee is information — in his words, he's a glorified "leg man." He says, "We're here to do the things the legislators don't have time to do (collecting information, opinions, and the details necessary to put out legislation). I'll pull things together and come up with ideas of my own — what I do, very often, is put up something to be shot at — something for the committee to work from."

The committee is attempting to deal with a legislature in transition from the leisurely biennial 30-day sessions of the state's embryonic days, to today's 150 day sessions, and, with the inevitable march of "progress," to tomorrow's full time legislature.

"Oregon's legislature is undergoing changes," said Kerans. "We have a citizen's legislature. There's not a full-time politician

here — they're all part time politicians. They have other businesses and professions."

The committee's main concern is bills regulating conflict of interest and financial disclosure for legislators. Kerans said, "As the legislators stay longer and move towards longer sessions, this raises the question of personal interests conflicting with legislative interests. We're moving towards a professional legislature, but we have to find something that fits this legislature."

And this legislature is in a curious position, almost in limbo, so to speak. "As the complexity grows the legislature moves into new areas — it's not an arithmetical but a geometrical increase in complexity. everything shows the same upward trend in involvement and size."

But as Oregon's legislative functions have expanded, they have also demanded more of the citizen legislator. Many legislators have been forced to retire from service because of financial considerations, and as the sessions get longer, the legislator's personal financial considerations become more acute.

And the Oregon legislature thus finds itself in limbo — not a professional legislature, but certainly not the collection of farmers and businessmen leisurely gathering for a short session as in past years.

"We're not at the point where we're having 25 day sessions, and not at the point where there's 250 day sessions — we have to find

something that matches our present circumstances."

The financial remuneration for serving in the legislature is not generous — Kerans estimates it at about \$7500 a year. And so most of the legislator's support must come from their outside personal resources. This raises a problem. "How much do we ask a businessman to disclose to his competitors while at the same time insuring the public that he is not making a personal gain here?" Kerans asks.

That is what the committee is trying to determine regarding conflict of interest and financial disclosure — how to make a reconciliation between a citizen legislator with his own private interests to protect and a public that demands honest legislature. "We've lost a lot of faith in government," Kerans said, "and part of this is in response to that."

Kerans' job is to provide the committee with the basic background information to consider this matter and others, including bills concerning open meetings, open records, and regulation of lobbying.

He drafts amendments and re-drafts bills at the direction of the committee, interviews people knowledgeable in the matters before the committee, and generally directs the input of information to the committee.

So, perhaps in a sense he has resigned one editor's job and taken another — but this time, it is the legislators, and not the readership of the Emerald, that decides whether or not if what Grattan makes is really good.

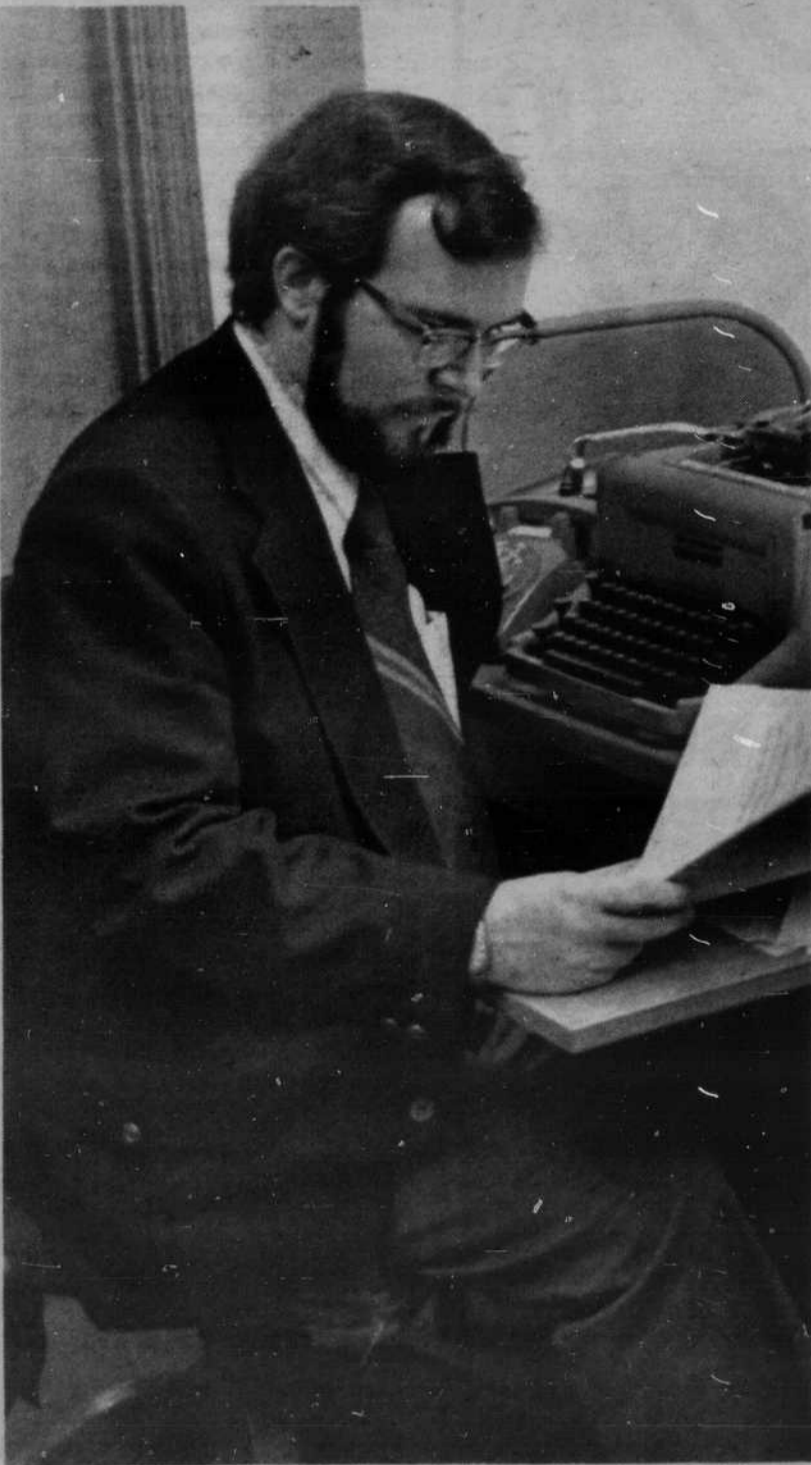


Photo by Peter Grant

Grattan Kerans