

Mud-drenching leads to new concept of play

By LUELLEN FLETCHER
Of the Emerald

When the bell rang, signaling the end of "unstructured play," 35 mud-drenched participants threw their hands in the air and exclaimed, "Boooo!" Several conspicuously clean spectators scrambled to the top of the embankment as two men watching from a safe distance were trying to get to the nitty gritty of the situation.

"This must be one of those ways to get rid of pent up frustrations," mused one. The other, the owner of a construction company, laughed. "I'm going to hire every one of them this winter and throw them in the ditches."

Rick Scott, a University senior majoring in arts and recreation who spent six months organizing the Playground Leaders Workshop, explains that this is a new concept of play. "We are trying to make professionals aware of the alternatives to play," says Scott. "It's a simple concept, but often overlooked."

Such ideas as spontaneity, competitive versus non-competitive play and the need for different activities for different people were tossed around in group discussions by the day camp supervisors and playground leaders who participated Saturday at Fern Ridge Park. Tim Patrick, a teen coordinator for the Eugene Department of Parks and Recreation, expressed his desire to understand the motives behind his actions so that he can better understand the motives of the teenagers he works with. "When you become aware of your self-limitations, you can work to counteract them," Patrick said.

Joni Chase from the Maple School Playground at Corvallis said she had known before she attended the workshop that she was competitive, but the workshop helped her to understand the play needs of non-competitive children. "I never realized that others can be just as non-competitive as I am competitive," said Chase.

Ellen Goreham from Springfield said as she picked globs of mud from her face, "I know the kids will really get off on this." She plans to find or make a mud pit to accommodate her young friends, grades one through six.

At the end of the workshop Scott asked for all participants to make comments. He, too, noted various developments throughout the day. For instance in the mud activity, participants first demonstrated some signs of aggression by slinging mud with "an eye for an eye" philosophy. Then everyone ganged up on those few who had a spot of skin or a shred of



Photo by F.H.A.T. Axmacher

The uniform was "Dress Muds" Saturday for several lucky playground leaders. Some found the exercise brought out their aggressions, while others just stood around and laughed.

clothing left unsoiled. And later, says Scott, "everybody was an equal, so they cooperatively worked at burying one person."

Other activities included playing all alone, in which some learned that unless they could be creative in finding something to do without the aid of rules or other people, they were doomed to boredom and frustration. Scott explained that this is one way to emphasize the need for programs for all people, not only those with special athletic ability.

The participants also experimented with unstructured volleyball after first playing according to the regular rules. Some found themselves to be more aggressive than they would have previously admitted. Others became bored without rules or any motivation to win.

An arts and crafts skills workshop was held June 11 for the same group of people who participated in the play workshop. Scott will receive three credits from the University for planning the play phase of the workshop. He explains that educating professionals is only the first step toward changing some of the traditional attitudes about play. Children are naturally quite capable when it comes to play, but if pushed into activities that are not structured with a healthy understanding of the needs play fulfills, work and play can become synonymous.

Martin

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He admits that the GOP is locked out of the Portland urban vote, due to a strong Democratic influence there. However, he believes Republicans can win over the remaining 80 per cent of the voters.

"Those seats held by conservative Democrats are fair game for Republicans," he said. "Their needs ought to be uppermost in our minds."

Martin believes at least three of these needs are "personal, individual freedom, reduction of unresponsive controls and quality education with accountability."

Commenting on the recent legislative session, Martin said "the 1977 Legislature was a case study of frustration." He pointed out that 60 per cent of the bills passed did so during the last ten days of the session.

"There's no way in the world that mistakes were not made," he said. As such he is among a group of legislators who have encouraged the governor to veto some of the bills no one understood.

To improve the situation, Martin suggests that the number of bills a legislator can introduce be limited to ten. "That would eliminate a lot of bills like the Sasquatch, square dancing and ten-foot bed-sheet."

He would also like a procedure where each bill was acted on by April. If not, the piece of legislation would automatically be dead.

He also believes the house speaker's authority should not be expanded. Instead, he would prefer that bills were assigned to committee by an advisory group, similar to the 1977 rules committee which assumed most of the duties of the speaker in May.

In response to an audience question, Martin speculated on the possibility that he would enter the race for governor. He says he has not made up his mind yet, since circumstances may change. "But if the deadline were tomorrow, I'd file," he said.

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