

# Sky's bleached look not from laundry

The brilliant blue that made Eugene's summer sky famous is fading. It's taking on a bleached-out look similar to old Levis that have been through the wringer and hung out to dry once too often.

But unlike the pair of well-worn jeans, the sky isn't supposed to sport a washed-out look. According to nature's plan, the sky needn't worry about basking in the sun so long that its brilliant blue hue might fade.

Nature's plan, however, didn't account for man's tinkering.

Man has learned to burn his fields to rid them of pests. He has learned to build factories that send their wastes spewing into the atmosphere. He has learned lots of tricks for bleaching out the sky.

One of his favorites is called "the motor vehicle."

In this trick, man pumps a few gallons of gasoline into the vehicle's tank, floors its gas pedal and away he goes. The clincher comes when figuring out the ratio between the amount of energy (in the form of gasoline) he pumps into the machine and the amount of work it offers in return. Estimates place the efficiency ratio somewhere around 25 per cent. For every unit of energy man puts into the motor vehicle, he receives a quarter of a unit of work in return. The difference between those two numbers winds up, in part, in the sky as polluting agents with fantastic "bleaching" powers. The effect is one glurpy, hazy sky.

By 1976, according to the state Department of Motor Vehicles, Lane County residents had accumulated 204,335 motor vehicles, all operating at the low 25 per cent efficiency level. What's more, vehicle traffic in the Eugene-Springfield area amounts to more than one billion miles per year, according to the Lane

Regional Air Pollution Agency (LRAPA).

These figures worry quite a few residents in the area who kind of enjoyed the brilliant blue of yesterday's skies. The figures become even more fretful when one considers the explosive effect they have when combined with the area's geographic factor.

If the Eugene-Springfield area were located in the vast stretches of eastern Oregon flatlands, chances are air pollution wouldn't plague the area as it actually does here in the Willamette Valley. But the fact is, the Willamette Valley is surrounded with such close-lipped mountain ranges that it has an air pollution potential as great as Los Angeles, the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reports.

The Willamette Valley has "restricted ventilation," according to meteorologists. This means the Coast and Cascade mountain ranges bordering the valley act as barriers to wind movement and impair any consequent dispersal of pollutants.

Summer winds blowing from the north tend to push all air pollutants in the valley to the southern end. When temperature inversion puts a "lid" of heat on the valley, pollutants are trapped and tend to multiply each day until the inversion factor disappears with cooler weather. With such a natural factor so agreeable to air pollution, Willamette Valley residents have to be doubly conscious of the smoggy threat.

Air pollution is broken down into three categories by the Lane Regional Air Pollution Agency (LRAPA): suspended particulates, carbon monoxide and photochemical oxidants.

LRAPA spokesman Marty Douglas says suspended par-

ticulates (mainly dust and smoke) pose the greatest threat to the county, due mainly to field burning and industries. Motor vehicles, he adds, contribute almost 30 per cent when considering the vehicles' actual emissions as well as the dust stirred up by them on the road.

Lane County's carbon monoxide level is usually fairly low, Douglas says, although motor vehicles contribute 78 per cent.

Photochemical oxidants are the product of sunlight and unseen gaseous pollutants such as hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides. Motor vehicles contribute 57 per cent of the county's

hydrocarbons and 32 per cent of its nitrogen oxides, Douglas says.

The Eugene-Springfield area's first air pollution alert for photochemical oxidants came during the summer of 1974, when the amount of these pollutants climbed above the alert level for nine days.

The alert level, as established by the DEQ, is 200 micrograms of pollutants per cubic meter. During the 1974 alert, photochemical oxidants reached 245 micrograms. The area's second alert for photochemical oxidants came on Aug. 16, 1977, and stayed for less than 24 hours with a high of 229 micrograms of the pollutants per cubic meter.

With the facts of Eugene-Springfield air pollution in mind, the Lane Council of Governments transportation committee and several subcommittees composed the Eugene-Springfield Area 2000-Transportation Plan, released early this month.

The plan contains several alternative methods of transportation proposals, including an extensive rapid transit bus system which would provide express bus service between Eugene and Springfield; encouragement for carpools and discouragement for downtown parking; and general encouragement for bicyclists and pedestrians by improving the area's bike paths and sidewalks.

## Pedestrians may need tanks, bodyguards to survive traffic

With 5,000 motor vehicles and umpteen bicycles barreling through the intersection each day, 13th and University is a sore spot for campus planners scratching their heads over the campus traffic situation.

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The campus planning department surveyed the intersection in May, 1976, and is just now formulating the results of that survey. Among the preliminary data, campus planner David Rowe said he has determined 44 per cent of the drivers using the intersection are students, 15 per cent are faculty and staff members, 17 per cent are visitors, 4 per cent are vendors or commercial drivers and 14 per cent are miscellaneous en-

titles with no University association.

Rowe said the survey also shows that 7 per cent were just passing through campus with no University business and 1.7 per cent were lost.

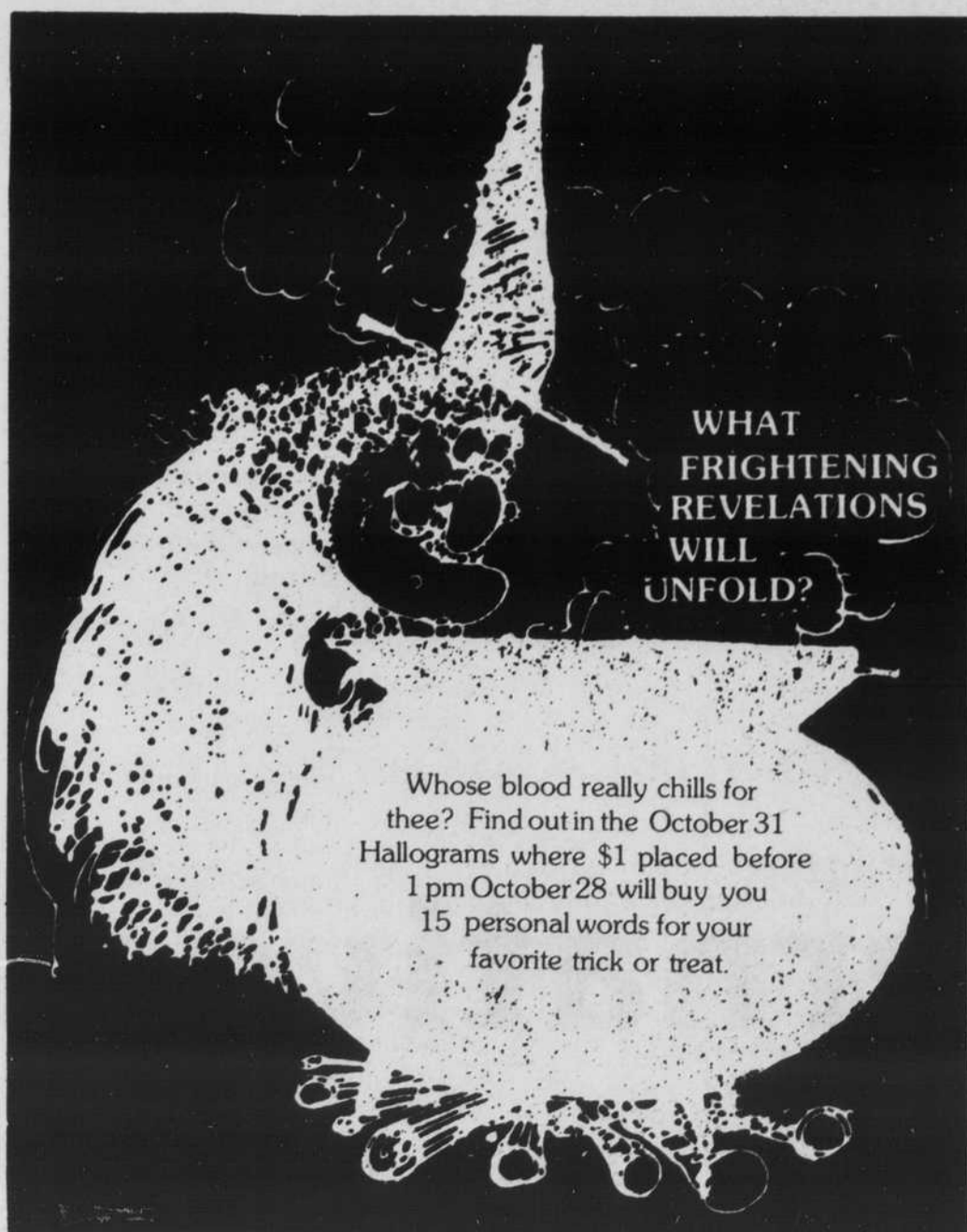
"We had one driver who was really lost," Rowe recalls. "He was driving a huge Winnebago motor home with a boat hooked on the back and a load of runny-nosed kids. Said he was looking for his motel, the poor guy."

One proposal to ease the intersection's traffic was put forth by the Survival Center last year and calls for extending 13th Avenue's blocked off area to include the intersection, thereby clearing motor vehicles out of it. The proposal hasn't gone far, however, because it does not account for emergency vehicle access nor commercial deliveries to the EMU and the University

Press in Allen Hall, Rowe says.

Another proposal swirling about campus for improved University traffic is opening the Autzen stadium parking lot for commuters who could park there and walk or bike to campus via the footbridge. The idea has been around for several years, Rowe says, but has never been developed.

To accommodate the University's growing bicycle population (Rowe estimates 3,000 bicycles roam the campus), the University may up the number of bicycle racks. Rowe says 1,500 more racks are needed and with passage of House Bill 3149 by the 1977 Legislature, the University can now funnel revenues generated from motor vehicle parking and violation fees into better bicycle facilities on campus.



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