

*Competition these days
is a serious business
for rabbits on the road*



A contestant peers anxiously from its pen, awaiting the judges' decision at a rabbit show held this weekend at the Lane County Fairgrounds. Entries came from as far away as Idaho to compete. Photos by Erich Boekelheide

Long-eared entries vie for coveted prizes



By MIKE LEE
Of the Emerald

There were 649 rabbits entered in the Spring Rabbit Show Saturday; 639 survived.

As parents and children alike looked on, the 10 finalists in the "single fryer" commercial competition were killed and strung by their feet from an eye-level bar. In turn, the skin of each rabbit was neatly "peeled" from tail to head — much like peeling a rubber glove from a hand. The newly-reversed fur was placed in a zip-lock plastic bag while the finalist was sent to the next part of the judging.

The only fur left clinging to the carcass was on the feet.

"This is just like going to a dog show for us," said Sally Ulam.

Ulam, a member of the sponsoring Emerald Empire Rabbit Breeders Association, said that was why the competition-convention drew rabbits and their breeders from as far away as Keena, Idaho.

"No breeding . . . allowed in the showroom," declared the rules, but there were plenty of other things to look at. Besides the 649 rabbits on display, a few were on sale: A black hare named "Darth Vader" went for \$7.50, and pedigree rabbits were as high as \$25. Women at one booth hawked high-technology rabbit food, while staffers at another offered pamphlets which included a pictorial essay on the "Proper Posing of Rabbit." Adults walked about displaying their patch-ridden coats, designating local home rabbit clubs.

Rabbit breeders attend shows such as this in hope of garnering a "leg" (three wins in a show), according to Ulam. Anyone who collects three legs wins the Grand

Championship.

Ulam, a homemaker whose husband works at a lumber mill, has been breeding rabbits for 18 years and exhibiting them for seven. She attends about 20 out of the 50 Northwest rabbit shows a year, logging nearly 2,000 miles in the process. The farthest she's traveled for a competition has been to Chehalis, Wash.

The owners have no problems transporting rabbits from place to place because they don't become car sick. "I've never lost a rabbit," says Beverly Ramsey, a Eugene breeder.

Shows vary in size, but the largest is the annual national convention, which draws 5,000 animals. It will be held in Tucson, Ariz., this November.

After Tucson and their days of glory, what will the rabbits have to look forward to?

Some, like the 10 skinned finalists, never survive the competition. Exceptional ones may travel the rabbit circuit for years. For the rest of them, a future on the dinner table or in a laboratory is likely. The feet end up on key rings, the fur is used in clothing and toys, and, according to one pamphlet "gardeners beg for the manure."

Another piece of literature, "43 Little Known Facts About Rabbits," explores the myriad uses for the creatures. For instance, rabbit meat can be prepared in over 300 different ways and is good for the stomach because it's easily digested. Rabbit feet serve as cosmetic brushes for the stars, and every other part can be used for something.

For the owners, there is no end-of-the-line. They will continue driving from town to town, living from weekend to weekend, ever in search of the elusive leg.

Loser labels ASUO an expensive joke

Lee is waiting for the ASUO Constitution committee to respond to the complaint he filed last April 20 protesting the legality of the recent ASUO primary election.

Lee, who finished third in the primary with a campaign promise of "doing nothing," says the ASUO Constitution requires elections be held in the first half of May.

ASUO Pres. Ramon Herrera has postponed calling a meeting of the Constitution committee to answer the protest until next week because three of five committee members have conflicting finals at the law school.

"If it sounds like I'm stalling Mike, well, maybe I am," Herrera says.

"If Ramon doesn't bring up the issue, he is calling the ASUO government a joke," says Lee, "Does Ramon want to go out on that note?"

Herrera, after making jokes about putting off the decision until new ASUO Pres. Scott Bassett takes office on May 25, says Lee's complaint will be heard next week. "I promise," he said.

Herrera says the reason the elections were held

in April instead of May was because law students get out of school early in May and would be unable to participate.

But that is no excuse, says Lee.

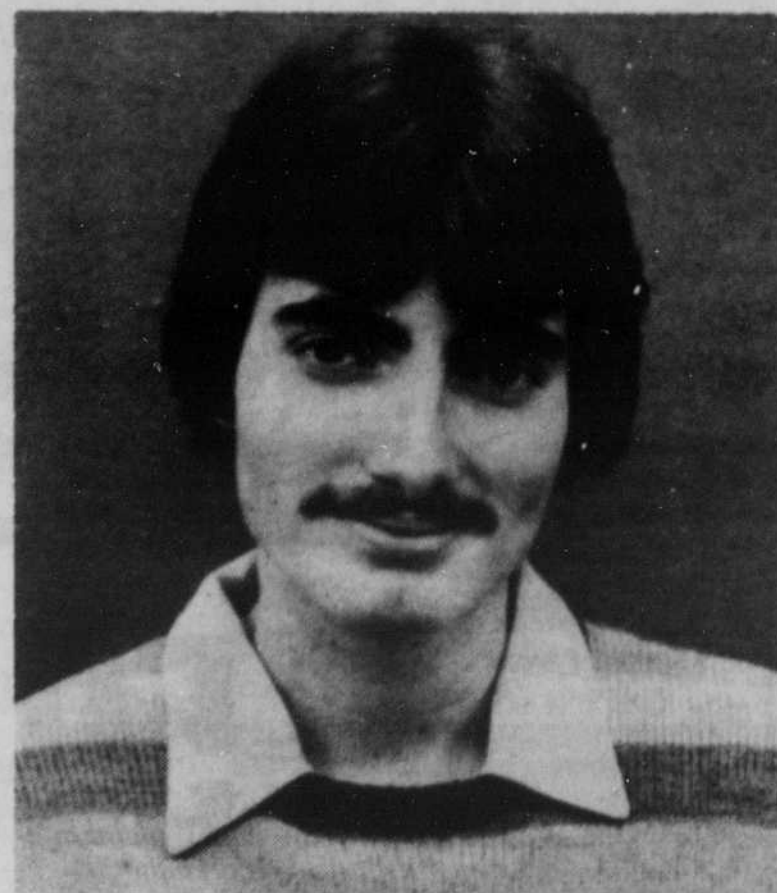
"We're college students. If they (the ASUO) can't tell what month it is . . . It sounds like a "national security" argument to me. They should have planned ahead," he says.

Although a ruling in Lee's favor is unlikely, Lee says he will win even if he loses.

"They will just prove my point that student government is a joke," he says. "But it's an expensive joke. One and a half million dollars isn't a laughing matter. The way they spend it is."

Lee says he will claim a moral victory if he loses, adding that he plans to have all sorts of fun next year with Bassett's "unconstitutional" government.

"I tried to install respect for student government by promising what I could deliver — nothing," he says, referring to his presidential campaign. "How can students respect student government when student government doesn't respect its own constitution?"



Mike Lee

Emerald Photo