

The scariest ride in Eugene

TWO A.M. The night sky is pitch black, rainclouds blotting out any hope of a moon.

Franklin Boulevard lies empty save a lone bicyclist riding toward Springfield. He exits onto the bike trail that crosses the Willie Knickerbocker bridge.

That's his first mistake.

His second is not turning around. A right turn after the bridge and the rider bursts into solid, utter darkness.

Eugene bike trails are among the best in the country — winding river banks, thick woods, grassy parks. They take a cyclist off the main streets, and into the greenways of Eugene, away from the noise, air and traffic of the city.

They also take him away from the lights, people and protection of Eugene — not to be taken

lightly at two a.m. when the ribbon of asphalt disappears into blackness and a twig has just snapped from behind.

THE CYCLIST brakes hard as he feels his bike sink into soft earth and feels a sticky spider web break across his face. Feeling for the trail with his foot, he finds asphalt and stares ahead. Nothing.

This particular section of bike trail is a "real oldy," says Diane Bishop, bicycle coordinator for the city of Eugene.

When the county first built it they "didn't realize there would be night commuters," Bishop says. So they left out the lights.

Now certain stretches, the ones that pass through the small woods, rank among the scariest places in the city at

night.

In the early morning, men with unwashed beards and tattered duffle bags come out of the brambles along the Willamette River and stroll along the path. In early evening, small fires dot the river banks as transients settle in for the evening.

Night falls like a soggy blanket.

"God, it's dangerous," says Gary Darnielle, a member of a group of joggers called "Trail Observers."

Darnielle's group lobbies for lighting and upkeep of the city's and county's jogging and bicycle trails. He says he doubts the county parks department will install any lights along the unlit trails because of problems they have had with lighting other trails.

"Vandals tear them down as fast as they put them up," Darnielle says.

"They have zippo funds for improvements."

FIVE HUNDRED yards of uncertainty lie in front of the cyclist. He knows the twists and turns almost by heart from daily commuting, but the darkness is confusing.

A sound like garbled voices comes from the direction of the river — a rustling from behind.

Marcia Morgan works as a crime specialist for the Lane County Sheriff's department, on the rape prevention team. She says not to sweat it.

"It is not a haven for rapists," Morgan says. "There is not a high percentage of crimes in that area."

Morgan says she would like to see more people use the paths at night to give the area a better reputation.

"The less people use it, the more isolated it will be," she says. Her advice is to ride very quickly and travel in pairs.

THE CYCLIST is riding again, slowly. His eyes have adjusted and by straining he can distinguish the edge of asphalt from the edge of — for all intents and purposes — the void.

Slowly, he maneuvers the curves and dips. Finally a thin beam of lamplight strikes against the path.

Entering the street from the bike path is like finding a friend in a foreign place. The glow of the streetlight shows the way home.

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CIS department adds sections

In order to alleviate the crush of students trying to schedule lower division computer science classes, the computer and information science department has added two sections to its curriculum.

Another section of CIS 201 will be offered winter term, and an additional section of CIS 203 will be offered spring term.

The two added sections are part of an introductory program that is a prerequisite for the upper division CIS classes.

Robert Berdahl, dean of the arts and sciences college, says that the names of approximately 150 students who tried, unsuccessfully, to register for CIS 201 classes this fall were collected. Those students currently are

being notified of the course additions.

Each of the sections will have a capacity of 300 students and will use microcomputers instead of the University's main computers.

Both Berdahl and Steve Hedetniemi, head of the computer science department, say with the addition of the two sections, the demand from students will be met. However, Hedetniemi says the solution is only short-term.

"We have no answer for the wave of students that will hit the following year in the upper division classes," Hedetniemi says.

Hedetniemi says his department still is very optimistic about the effect of a "bulge" in enroll-

ment. "The demand is not just from students who are majoring in computer and information science," he says. "The demand is also coming from students majoring in other fields."

The money for the classes was scraped together from many of the programs in the arts and sciences college, Berdahl says.

Hedetniemi says the CIS department likes to be optimistic, but it may be "wishful thinking" to believe that more crowding problems won't arise.

"We may never be able to handle the full potential capacity of students interested in the program," he says.

Economic conference planned

Small business concerns and economic growth in Lane County are just two of the topics to be discussed at an economic development conference Nov. 19-20 at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

Frank Cappiello, of the public television series "Wall Street Week," will be the keynote speaker at the conference, which is entitled "Lane County's Economy: The 80's and Beyond."

The more than a dozen workshops and 50 panelists will cover topics such as local energy source development, ways of attracting new industry, formation of small business capital, the role of tourism and expansion of foreign and domestic markets.

Those who register by today will pay \$30, including three meals or \$15 without meals. After today, the fees will rise to \$40 with meals or \$20 without

meals. The conference is sponsored by the Lane County commissioners, the Lane County Private Industry Council, the Lane County Chamber of Commerce and the Lane County Department of Employment and Training.

For more information, call Dave Fidanque or Bev Holman at the county employment and training department at 687-3626 or 687-3822.

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