

# emerald



Photo by Bob Baker

## Vuarnet visions

Sudden spring temperatures threw much of the University into pandemonium Wednesday, as students searched frantically for their warm weather wear. Freshman Mike Haley spent most of the day reflecting on his future tan.

## Students vote on funding bill

By Debbie Howlett  
Of the Emerald

A battle between the Incidental Fee Committee and the recreation and intramural program over increased funding has resulted in a referendum on the general election ballot.

RIM asked the IFC last February to increase its budget of just over \$5,000 this year to \$56,000 for next year, a jump of 1,000 percent.

The reason for the requested boost in the budget stems from a decision by the recent special session of the legislature to eliminate funding for all physical education activities classes. Part of that money funded the University's RIM program.

The whole issue left Mike Ellis, head of the P.E. department, "mad as hell," while Karsten Rasmussen, head of the IFC, and Alan Contreras, the ASUO acting vice-president of program administration, conceded that the dispute might lead to a ballot referendum.

According to Rasmussen, the committee decided that to budget RIM for the requested amount, incidental fees would have to be increased. Neither the IFC, Rasmussen nor Karla Rice, the director of RIM, wanted to take money from other ASUO programs that had already been cut back. The committee then unanimously voted to approve a referendum.

"They felt that there was no room to maneuver with the athletic department's and other ASUO program's budgets," Rice said.

The referendum asks that the

ASUO be allowed to increase the incidental fee by \$1.50 per student per term, in order to raise \$56,000 to be spent on RIM.

The increase in incidental fee money for RIM will make up only about half of the \$116,000 budget. The other half of the budget will come from either the health, physical education and recreation school's budget, increased participation fees or a combination of both.

Rice says she is happy the issue made it to the ballot but that the timing could have been better.

"I hate to see it come at this time, it's a bad time for students," she says.

According to Rice the program has been around for "eons." And without the money from incidental fees, "this building would close down at 5 (p.m.)."

Rice has also circulated a "fact sheet," detailing what exactly comprises the program. The sheet shows "17 team activities and 18 different 'all-campus events.'"

The fact sheet also notes that Esslinger and Gerlinger Hall facilities remain open until 9 p.m. during the week and 6 p.m. on weekends. A count taken winter term that is used as an "average" to indicate use shows that 2,032 people used the facilities.

If the referendum doesn't pass, "it looks like the program will go kaput," Rasmussen said.

Today is the last day to vote on the referendum and ballots can be marked at ASUO polling booths around campus.

## ASUO ballot questions evoke controversy

By Dane Claussen  
Of the Emerald

Two items that appeared in Wednesday's ASUO balloting have ASUO officials, a presidential candidate and the editor of the Oregon Daily Emerald wondering what hit them.

ASUO Pres. Rich Wilkins says he was unaware of the "opinion question" students were asked to vote on regarding the Emerald's incidental fee funding.

Emerald Editor Sally Hodgkinson said she had no idea the question was going to be on the ballot and that the question sounded like someone's "personal vendetta" against the paper.

And ASUO presidential candidate Kevin Kouns says he was caught off guard by a referendum requesting a raise in incidental fees to fund the recreation and intramural program. The measure appeared on the same ballot that contained the Emerald question.

Kouns said the measure, which reads

"Shall the ASUO be allowed to increase the incidental fee by \$1.50 per student per term, in order to raise \$56,000 to be spent on Recreation and Intramurals?" gives his opponent C.J. Balfe an unfair advantage because Balfe knew about the referendum beforehand and was able to do last-minute campaigning in support of the measure.

"It's a question about how the process has been used," Kouns said, criticizing the lack of debate on the referendum.

The choice given students — to either raise their own incidental fees or do without a recreation and intramurals program next year — is an "are you still beating your wife?" question," he said.

Gus Palmitessa, ASUO elections director, cites negligence as the reason Kouns didn't know of the ballot measure.

"Hell, if he (Kouns) would have asked me, I would have told him," Palmitessa said. The Incidental Fee Committee's request to have the measure placed on the ballot was decided during a public

meeting and reported in the Emerald, he said.

"I would assume that that information was available to everyone," especially students keeping track of the student government, Palmitessa said.

The question about the Emerald wasn't a matter of public record before Wednesday's voting. Palmitessa says he didn't inform fellow ASUO officials or Emerald editors about the question because he "didn't give the public any advance warning" and wanted the students' votes to be "gut responses."

The proposal, which is not binding, reads, "Should the Oregon Daily Emerald continue to be funded by a subscription through student incidental fee dollars, rather than be sold on campus?"

Wilkins and Hodgkinson criticized Palmitessa for keeping it a secret.

"I'm a little concerned because it went on the ballot without anyone knowing about it," Wilkins said.

Hodgkinson said that if the ASUO wanted to know what students think about the Emerald, "they should com-

mission a report or survey rather than slapping it on a ballot."

It was "irresponsible to throw one sentence on the ballot without telling anyone" and it "sounds like a personal vendetta," Hodgkinson said.

Palmitessa defended the appearance of the question as an appropriate gauge of public opinion, and said the results could "be enlightening to the ODE."

"This year the ODE has been a point of controversy," he said.

"It's very possible that results will show that the student body — those who vote — will show they are satisfied with the ODE or that they'd like to see some changes," Palmitessa said.

"There's been no planning about the whole thing from the beginning," Wilkins said. "If there's going to be something on the ballot that students get an opinion from, it should not be a surprise."

Not just anything should be placed on the ballot without language being scrutinized and without the appropriate people being told, Wilkins said.