

# The rockets' red glare

If you want to catch "the rockets' red glare" and "the bombs bursting in air" from a seat that even Francis Scott Key would envy, arrive early at Autzen Stadium for the 20/30 Club's annual Fourth of July fireworks show.

Tailgate parties start around 6:30 p.m. before the show begins at dusk, around 9 p.m.

The 20/30 Club coordinator of the show has been praying for weeks that it won't rain or his group will have \$5,000 of soggy fireworks on their hands. Every year, a coordinator "gets gray hair" from worrying about the weather, says Rod Miles, the 1982 coordinator. Luck seems to be with the group — there hasn't been a rain-out in 38 years.

The 20/30 Club is a civic organization which raises money for child welfare, and helps support the Special Olympics, the Pearl Buck Center and Easter Seals, among others. The group, which is restricted to men in their twenties and thirties, has been doing this show for more than 40 years.

The annual Autzen Stadium show is the club's way of "saying thank you to the community" for its support.

Early in the morning of the 4th, Club members will drive north to Canby and load their van with boxes of explosive shells which are

guarded throughout the day. That evening six members of the club with fireworks experience will man "the pits" — metal boxes filled with sand in which metal tubes are placed. At regular intervals the pit men insert one shell per tube and light it by hand with a flare.

When the flame ignites the powder in the 3 to 6 inch shells, "you can't believe the blast," Miles says. The threat of serious injury keeps an ambulance on hand outside the pits for the entire show. Miles, a three-year veteran of "the pits," says lighting the 282 rockets is "grueling." An ambulance crew kept on duty in case of accidents retreats to their vehicle to avoid the noise.

Each blast shoots rockets with names like "Falling Flowers," "Shooting Stars," "Chrysanthemums," "Peonies," and "The Battle of the Clouds" into the sky. Miles says "Chrysanthemums" are the most popular and easily recognized as the largest and most colorful.

Over the years Club members have taken their chances firing the rockets by hand. "We'd rather give a check to Pearl Buck and get uniforms for their (the kids) basketball games," instead of spending it on an electric launching system, Miles says.

Fortunately, there haven't

been any accidents in the last 38 years.

Between each volley of rockets, set pieces of slow burning fireworks are lit on the stadium floor. Past pieces include the Liberty Bell, the American flag and Kermit the Frog. This year there will be 10 different designs, including the flag and the Liberty Bell. A popular set piece called "Niagra Falls," will be lit again this year. He says the Club receives "lots of requests" for the piece, which stretches 70 feet across the field.

Contributions from the community pay for the fireworks. Any extra money is given to any of the organizations 20/30 helps fund. "We generally come out even," Miles says. Contributions are accepted at the stadium on the day of the show or can be mailed to PO Box 365, Eugene, 97401.

This year's show, as usual, begins at dusk, around 9 p.m. Those who want to watch the show from inside the stadium should get there early — a crowd of 20,000 to 30,000 spectators is normal. If you can't get in the stadium, you'll miss the set pieces. Then you'll have to settle for a view from the banks of the Willamette River.

Story by Sally Offer

## Ordinances on ordinance

Planning your own set of fireworks? Be careful. Oregon law and Eugene ordinances are strict and specific on what is and isn't legal.

Only sparklers and smoke devices are allowed within the city limits. It is possible for individuals to get a permit from the state for rockets, roman candles, firecrackers, etc. but only public groups, like the Active 20/30 Club, can light fireworks in Eugene.

Eugene authorities have an agreement with United Parcel Service and other shipping agencies that any package marked fireworks is to be held for inspection.

"It appears that there are certain magazines that advertise these fireworks. People not

knowing the law go ahead and order," says Bill York of the Eugene Fire Prevention Bureau. A citation is rarely issued, but the packages must be sent back.

Should you decide to go ahead and risk setting off some rockets or the like, beware of the penalties — city fines can run up to \$500.

State and local authorities agree that personal injury is the primary reason Oregon has such stringent regulations. The usual warm weather in July makes fire another hazard. More than 200 fireworks-related blazes were responded to last year throughout the state and damage to private and public property reached \$165,000.

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## Heard about the Cervical Cap?

The Cervical Cap is used as a barrier method of birth control. It is a thimble shaped cap made out of rubber which fits tightly over the neck of the cervix, preventing sperm from entering the uterus. The cap was used in this country years ago, but has not gained popularity until recently.

It has been used for years successfully in Western Europe. At this time the cervical cap is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Studies are being done to determine its current effectiveness and safety.



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