

Student builds University a kiln . . . for free

By Kim Carlson
Of the Emerald

One way or another, almost everyone manages to leave something of themselves for posterity when he or she graduates from college and moves on.

Some carve initials on desks or scratch deep insights on restroom walls. Others make or break records, earning footnotes in the history books.

John Lewis, an undergraduate fine arts major here at the University, isn't interested in bathroom hieroglyphics or the 100-yard dash. Instead, he's designed and built an \$8,000 kiln for the University ceramics department . . . free of charge.

"It was a learning experience. I learned more from this than anything else I've ever done," said Lewis. "I didn't do it for the school, I mean, well, it was for my own benefit. I'll be a poor graduate, but rich in experience."

Bob James, a fine arts professor and the acting ceramics department head, says Lewis shows the energy and effort required of a student in a graduate program.

"He wanted to build the kiln for his own experience. It was good for him to have the opportunity," James says. "If all students were as motivated, we wouldn't be able to accommodate them. He rose to the task he assigned himself."

Lewis is curious about the entire ceramic process, from step one — shaping the clay — to the actual firing.

"I'm approaching ceramics with an interest in geology. Ceramics is an instant, man-made, geological process. It's really fascinating," Lewis says. "The information that is obtainable from the

kiln will enable me to better understand the ceramic process.

"I have an interest in the process and that led to me building the kiln. It was all for the personal gain — my personal interests," he says. "A lot of people think it's OK to do just enough (in school). I guess I wanted to do a little more than enough. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity."

Although no University official asked Lewis to build the kiln, it was high time for a new one to be constructed. Another kiln, located on the same site behind the ceramics studio, is a twenty-year-old jumble of bricks that is, James admits, "...worn out and sagging. Kind of taffy-like."

Lewis replaced the larger, less energy efficient kiln, which he dismantled after getting the official go-ahead to construct his model.

He erected a 150-cubic foot kiln with surplus bricks from previous projects at the University.

While the new kiln has only 20 cubic feet of stacking space compared to 40 cubic feet in the previous model, it is more popular among students because they don't have to fill so much space. That allows the artists to concentrate on specialized pieces, rather than mass produce to fill the kiln just so it can be fired.

"There was absolutely no money available to work with," Lewis says. "I had to use my imagination and be resourceful. I made a lot of mistakes, but I tore it down and learned from it."

Lewis cut some bricks in half to accommodate the design he wanted. He used no power tools, manually sawing individual pieces. Special features in-

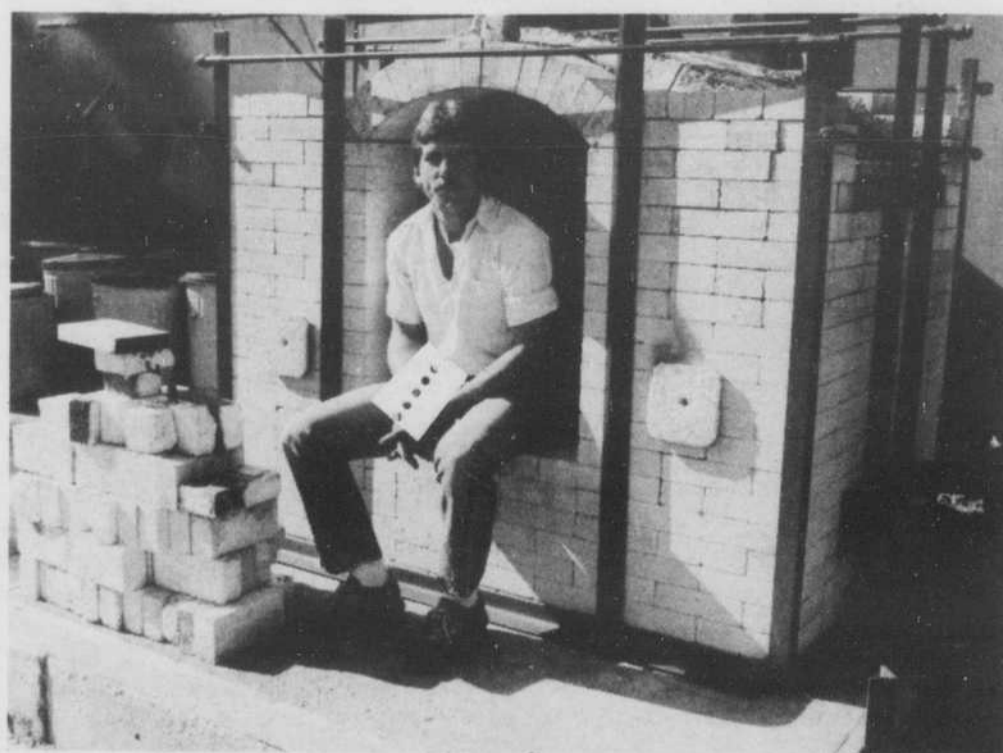


Photo by Mark Pynes

Senior John Lewis worked for six months to design and build an \$8,000 kiln for the University — free of charge.

clude a glazed interior and snug-fitting arch bricks that form the opening.

If the University had not already owned the bricks to be used, and if it had commissioned the labor to build the kiln, it would have been about an \$8,000 project, Lewis and James agree.

While free materials and labor are the stuff that department heads' dreams are made of, Lewis stresses that he built the kiln for himself.

"I did it to learn about it. It's a monumental feeling. I don't know how to

describe it," he says. "People kidded me about working on it for so long, but I really wanted to do it. Nobody pressured me."

Unless Eugene is shaken by an earthquake or flattened by a nuclear bomb, Lewis' kiln will be around for another generation of students to fire their crafts in.

"I guess I'm proud," admits Lewis with a grin. "It feels like a pretty major accomplishment."

Dean granted one-year leave

Bob Bowlin, dean of students, was officially granted a one-year leave of absence Tuesday. As of Jan. 1, the University will be without his services for the first time in more than two decades.

Bowlin will take the leave of absence to serve as the associate director of the Commission on Colleges of the North West Association of Schools and Colleges, an organization that handles all the accreditation of higher education in the Northwest.

Bowlin said the commission examines each school to determine how well they are fulfilling their goals and prepares a report for the college.

"It's like holding a mirror up to

the institution," Bowlin says, "so they can see their strengths and weaknesses."

A school that has not been accredited is not eligible for federal financial aid, Bowlin says, and students going to a non-accredited school will have problems transferring their credits.

"As associate director I'll be doing a lot of administrative work," Bowlin says, "but the richness of being able to see what other schools are doing, and the extensive exposure to higher education will be something I can't get anywhere else."

Bowlin started at the University as the assistant men's dean 22 years ago. He served as act-

ing registrar for a year, as the men's dean, the associate dean of students and finally as dean of students, a position he has held for 12 years. Bowlin has also been an associate professor in the education and personnel management department since 1965.

His duties as dean of students included working closely with students and students affairs groups like academic advising, the associate provost's office and campus living organizations.

Bowlin says when he was offered the job, he decided to take it for a year.

"After all," he says, "after 22 years in one place you don't 'lightly' leave."

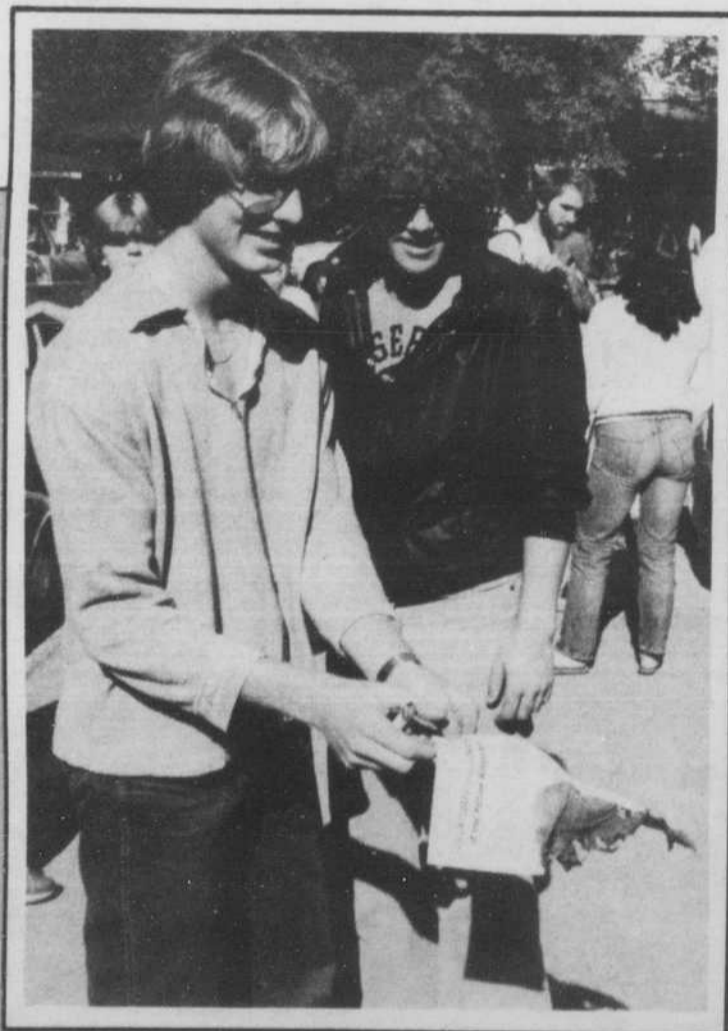


Photo by Mark Pynes

Flick of a Bic...

An unidentified high school student attending the Oregon Scholastic Press Association Conference decided to exercise his freedom of speech Wednesday by igniting some Communist literature.

After borrowing a lighter, the student set fire to a leaflet distributed by members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade.

He was part of the more than 2,000 high school journalists from all over the state who attended the conference. The journalists participated in writing contests, lectures, workshops, a keynote speech by ABC sports commentator Keith Jackson and tours of the Emerald.

When sunny skies brought many of the conference-goers outside, they also attended an impromptu meeting with members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade and Christian speakers.

Hult Center

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Ball says it was a fair meeting, but "it was certainly not the way I would have preferred to have seen it conducted."

"They were trying to be a little theatrical. In retrospect, the theatrics probably should have given way to deeper consideration on how and when to hold city council meetings."

Ball says citizens could have attended the meeting without holding a dinner ticket but admitted "that's very intimidating."

Council member Mark Lindberg also expressed dissatisfaction about the council meeting.

"One weird thing is it cost \$10 to get into the meeting," Lindberg says. "It was on the margin of your Oregon Public Meetings Law."

Lindberg says he wasn't aware the meeting would be conducted in the middle of the dinner.

"The council was scattered among hundreds of people, and there was only one microphone so there was obviously no room for discussion," he says. "Under those circumstances with 700 people screaming their approval it was real hard to say anything but 'yes.' So we did."

And if Lindberg were a citizen hearing about the name change on the day of the grand opening, "I would have felt the same way a lot of people did and that is hurt."

He says Mayor Gus Keller notified the council of the naming proposal on Sept. 22, and the council didn't have much time to examine the resolution. "It was a boom, boom, boom process," Lindberg says. "There was a lot of fast talking, fast thinking and snap decisions."

Lindberg has mixed feelings about the practice of naming public buildings after

private individuals.

"A lot of other projects are going to require public support," he says. This type of controversy may cause some prospective donors to shy away if they feel they're going to be "raked over the coals," he adds.

Lindberg says the council should have scrutinized the naming resolution in 1980.

"In hindsight we should have dotted every 'i' and crossed every 't' of the resolution," he says. "Maybe we ought to think about it."

Asked about the possibility of a council reversal of the name change, Hult angrily sputters his response.

"As far as I'm concerned they can name it any damn thing they want," he says. "If the city council wants to change it, that's fine with me. In fact, I kind of wish they would."

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