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Hult Center budget blues plague council

By Melissa Martin
Of the Emerald

A bright orange sign in the city council chambers read "For sale: Hult Center...will rename to suit this time...cash only," while a Hult Center proponent told more than 125 people Thursday that ticket sales brought \$6 million into the community since the September opening.

The Eugene Budget Committee listened to audience feedback for two hours at a public hearing for the preliminary budget recommendations.

The Hult Center, one of the several issues discussed in the meeting, will lose \$61,300 from its marketing and advertising budget if the council votes to approve the budget committee's recommendation this month.

"A reduction in the marketing budget will have an impact on income figures," said Gary Williams, chairman of finance for the Committee of the Performing Arts.

The Center has added \$1 million to the Eugene-area economy, Williams pointed out under the glare of television lights set up in front of the room.

"This snow job has laid down a layer of snow so deep you need a plow to get in," Tom Heusel of Citizens for Open Government contradicted, the group that opposed the Hult Center name

change.

The "incredible Hult hoax," Heusel said, gave a tax break to the Eugene Performing Arts Commission and financial donors.

"This isn't the first time the public is bailing out the city," Heusel said.

The Hult Center's recommended cut is part of the budget committee's revision of a proposal by Micheal Gleason, city manager.

In other action, representatives of the Eugene Commission for Human Rights asked budget committee members to "have compassion" on the program and not reduce the paid staff of two to the recommended one.

"I hope this is not an indirect way to phase out the Human Rights Commission," said resident Keli Osborn.

"I'm making a plea that you not balance the budget on the backs of the people," added a commission volunteer.

"The managerial magical wand won't solve the problem this time," Ann Bunnenberg said of the recommended cuts to the Human Rights program, which deals with affirmative action for the aging, disabled, minorities, women and youth.

The committee also added \$277,000 back into the budget for city swimming pools.



Photo by Bob Baker

Colin Gray, seated in the wheelchair, made a brief plea to the Eugene budget committee not to cut the city's Human Rights program.

Lecturer puts bite on students

By Sean Meyers
Of the Emerald

It was a subject, the lecturer would have freely admitted, that he could really sink his teeth into.

The occasion was a campus presentation Thursday by Jan Perkowski, the chairman of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia. The topic, of course, was vampires.

Most of the three-score in attendance were clearly serious students of East European culture. The motives of others, like the man in the Transylvanian cloak and the woman with the fluorescent hair, were suspect.

"The question I am most frequently asked is 'are there really vampires?'" said Perkowski, editor of *Vampires of the Slavs*. "In fact, there are, and I know because I met one."

With that opening salvo, Perkowski was guaranteed a captive audience.

As it turned out, Perkowski almost didn't meet his first vampire. He was just finishing up some research on a isolated Slavic society living in Canada.

"There was this one last farmhouse left, way off in the distance," said Perkowski. "I wanted to be thorough."

He struck up a conversation with a woman in her native Slavic tongue, noticing that all of her front teeth were missing, except the "canines."

"I figured, you know, they just couldn't afford dental work," said Perkowski. But his mental processes "raced at computer speed" when the subject turned to vampirism.

"I said 'what is a vampire?'" Perkowski remembers. "She said, 'I am.'"

Further probing revealed that certain

Slavic cultures determine vampirism upon the birth of a child. If the caul, the membrane encompassing the fetus, covers the head at birth the child is a vampire. But the parents can prevent that fate by saving the caul, drying it out, burning it and having the child ingest it when it's 12-years-old.

"If I had to do that, I'd mix it up in some brownies or something," Perkowski noted.

He also met an elderly woman that claimed her daughter was bitten by a vampire on the arm, not the neck.

But the Western stereotype of the blood-sucking, Dracula-vintage vampire is not historically correct, said Perkowski.

That myth springs from the "vampire epidemic" that swept the Balkan Peninsula a few centuries ago. In reality, many people were suffering from diarrhea or a similar disorder that caused a sharp decrease in bodily fluids. This left them weak, gaunt and pale, which the community attributed to vampires, who they believed were sapping the "life-blood" from people.

Western researchers liberally translated this to mean that the vampires were literally sucking blood from their victims.

In fact, the Slavic or "folklorist" vampire, not to be confused with the literary, psychic or psychotic vampire, feeds by sucking his or her own breasts or by climbing up a church steeple and ringing the bell. The first one to hear the bell dies. No fuss, no muss.

And don't expect a clove of garlic to fend off a determined vampire. Some of them like the taste, suggests Perkowski.

"One of my students said 'hell, if you had to drink blood all the time you'd spice it up, too.'"



Photo by Sean Meyers

Hi mom, hi dad...

Parents of University students can attend classes, an open house and various campus activities during Parents' Weekend today and Saturday.

"The events will help parents become acquainted with the campus and with their son's or daughter's perspective on campus life," says Gary Peiss, a computer science junior and chair of the planning committee for Parents' Weekend.

Activities begin today with parents invited to attend classes. Other events include:

The annual Canoe Fete, a floating parade on the Millrace. The fete begins at 5:30 p.m. across Franklin Boulevard from campus.

Saturday's events include five University faculty lectures on topics ranging from the quality of education to economic recovery.

The activities conclude with a Starlight Big Band Dance in the EMU Dad's Room at 9 p.m.