

# World Food Day lunch unites varied crowd

By Lori Steinhauer  
Of the Emerald

Members of the Eugene business, volunteer, student and unemployed communities came together Tuesday to attend a panel discussion and a free lunch marking World Food Day and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's 39th anniversary.

Individuals, volunteer organizations and governments throughout the world also shared their compassion for sufferers of hunger and poverty Tuesday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization originated in 1945, with 43 nation members, to increase production and improve distribution of agricultural goods throughout the world. Today membership has expanded to 156 nations.

On the local front, 300 sandwiches and apples were provided by local churches and volunteer groups for the more than 60 people who dropped in to eat, listen or voice opinions at the Lane Unemployment Project office on the Downtown Mall. Leftovers were

distributed to visitors in the vicinity, and delivered to the Family Shelter House and Womanspace.

In addition to feeding some hungry people, the gathering brought together people from all walks of life. Cynthia Kokis, a Eugene food day organizer said.

Kokis estimated that low-income citizens comprised about half the audience.

"There's a little distance between the unemployed and poor, and those who are not, and I think this bridged the distance a little. I think a lot of comfortable people want to help, but they're a little afraid," Kokis said.

The first of four panelists to speak on the politics of poverty was Kate Dickson of Eugene, who represented Sen. Mark Hatfield.

Dickson said Hatfield has put a commendable effort toward aiding the needy. She cited as an example his support of a bill that passed Congress on June 25, to aid impoverished citizens in South Africa. However Dickson said the bill had a flaw in that a portion of it also allocated military funds for the war against Nicaragua.

The other panelists had few favorable comments for the present administration, however.

State Rep. Larry Hill, D-Springfield, condemned Hatfield for vetoing 40 bills since the last legislative session in 1983, "the second largest number vetoed in state history."

"My guess is the (senator) is not in touch with real life. He's never been unemployed, he's never been hungry," Hill said, answering a question as to why Hatfield had vetoed bills that would support low-income citizens.

Panelist Donna Goetsch, director of Lane County Clients Council, pointed out that since Reagan became president, 70 percent of the federal budget cuts have affected families with less than \$10,000 yearly income. In addition, she said 3.5 million fewer children in the United States are receiving school nutritional aid.

Goetsch said the Eugene school breakfast program, which started again this week, will benefit those children who lack either the money or time to eat at home before school.

"The truth is you can't teach kids much who are



Photo by Michael Clapp

A panel discussion and free lunch marking World Food Day attracted a large and diverse crowd to the Downtown Mall Tuesday.

thinking about the pain in their stomach," she said, adding that hungry children often disrupt classes.

Meanwhile, Hill said many area school districts still need the program, but cannot afford it.

The last panelist to speak, Stefan Ostrach, of the Lane County Labor Council and the American Federation of State-County and Municipal Employees Council, pointed out that Oregon has lost \$1 billion in domestic spending since 1981.

Ostrach also expressed his fears over Ballot Measure 2.

"There's going to be poverty and hunger pretty quickly if Ballot Measure 2 passes," he said.

Another poverty-related problem Goetsch pointed out was that only 15 percent of the families who receive food stamps in the state can budget their stamps through the end of each month. Goetsch said surveys show people on food stamps on the whole are better shoppers than the public at large.

In addition to those at the mall, Kokis said among others who observed World Food Day were public school teachers who discussed the holiday in their classes, and many local organizations that held canned food drives for the needy.

## Dick Gregory to speak

Comedian and activist Dick Gregory will speak on "Social Justice in America" at South Eugene High School tonight at 7:30.

Gregory was one of the first black comedians to break the color line and perform in white nightclubs. He became active in the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, going to jail several times.

In 1967, Gregory took his first prolonged fast to protest the Vietnam war. He quit working in nightclubs in 1973.

Now Gregory devotes his time to touring and speaking on politics and health, two areas he believes are closely related.

Tickets for the event are available at the EMU main desk. Student tickets are \$2.50 in advance and \$3 at the door. General public tickets are \$3 in advance and \$3.50 at the door.

The event is sponsored by the Associated Students of Lane Community College.

## et al.

**HOMECOMING FLOAT CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP** will be held tonight in the EMU Forum room at 7 p.m. All organizations planning to build a float for the Homecoming Town and Gown Light Parade should attend. Bring plans and ideas to discuss.

**RICK ROLF**, foreign policy adviser to Sen. Mark Hatfield will speak tonight at 8 p.m. in Room 177 Lawrence Hall.

**MODEL UNITED NATIONS MEETING** at 7 p.m. in Room 627 PLC, all welcome.

**WOMEN IN COMMUNICATION** Open house tonight at 4:30 in the Eric Allen

Seminar Room, Room 307 Allen Hall.

**MEETING SET FOR CITY LEAGUE BASKETBALL** Eugene Parks and Rec. dept. will hold an organizational meeting tonight at 7:30 in the City Hall Council Chambers at 777 Pearl St. For more information call 687-5333.

**DRUIDS MEETING** tonight in the EMU Century Room D. at 7 p.m. All members please attend.

**"SHOULD A JOURNALIST BE THE NEXT SECRETARY OF STATE"** candidate, Don Clark, will be speaking today at noon in Room 167 EMU.

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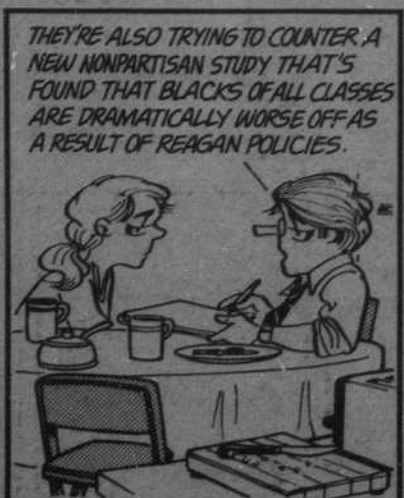
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