

What is watching talk?
And who is rolling by?
See Page 4B for fun on
Friday.

THE Friday EDITION

Oregon daily emerald

arts & entertainment

april 19, 1985

Solo and Syncopation

Naturalist re-created

Lee Stetson first performed "Conversation with a Tramp" on John Muir's birthday two years ago. This Sunday in Eugene, Stetson begins his third year of performing the one-man stage production, again on Muir's birthday, April 21, in conjunction with Earth Week activities.

Stetson, who has been a professional actor, director and writer for the last 15 years, uses his experience from more than 50 stage and television roles to re-create the character of Muir with believable sensitivity — from his strong yet gentle voice to the boyish gleam in his eye. He uses Muir's own words and knits the parts together with interpolations of his own.

"When I first started to write this," Stetson says, "I thought of it as a multi-character play. But as I did more research, it seemed clear that Muir should be the whole show himself. I hadn't thought of acting the part myself until I went to see the Muir house in Martinez (California) and then went to Yosemite for the first time."

"I arrived there one night in April and hiked up the

Yosemite Falls Trail to Columbia Point. I looked down on the valley in the moonlight and began to identify with Muir at that moment," Stetson says. "I knew then I would have to do it myself."

Muir, a dedicated conservationist, founded the Sierra Club. He also helped create Yosemite National Park.

The play is set in the living room of Muir's Martinez home, where the 75-year-old naturalist greets the audience members as if they were his guests. The year is 1913, one year before Muir's death, and he is waiting for word of President Wilson's decision on the Raker Bill — the highly controversial piece of legislation that would turn Yosemite's beautiful Hetch Hetchy Valley into a reservoir to supply drinking water to San Francisco.

While we wait, Muir, who was known as "a storyteller in a million," zestfully recounts some of his mountaineering experiences: trapped while climbing Mount Ritter, observing a Sierra gale from the top of a wildly waving Douglas fir, viewing the moonlight from

beneath Yosemite Falls before the wind pushed the water over him and nearly washed him down the cliff.

"Conversation with a Tramp" has been performed mainly in Yosemite, where Stetson, under the auspices of the Yosemite Natural History Association and the National Park Service, has spent two summers guiding visitors on nature walks during the day and performing the show at night. Now based in Los Angeles, Stetson is touring the country with his production.

"Conversation with a Tramp" will be presented by the Many Rivers Group of the Sierra Club and the University Survival Center.

The 90-minute performance will be held at the W.O.W. Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave., Sunday at 8 p.m. Tickets will be on sale at the door and in advance, \$3.50 for students and senior citizens and \$5.50 for the general public. Call the Survival Center, 686-4356, for more information and ticket sales.



Jazzists play tonight

If one attempted to compose a list of the truly great jazz drummers, a handful of names would immediately come to mind: Max Roach, Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, Kenny Clarke, Louis Bellson, Philly Joe Jones, and, of course, Art Blakey.

In what promises to be the jazz event of the year, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers will be making their first Eugene appearance in nearly a decade, tonight at the Community Center for the Performing Arts.

Blakey's legendary reputation is based on two solid assets. One is his Jazz Messengers, which, over the last 35 years, has featured (and often introduced to the listening public) a vast array of important, young musicians. Messenger alumni include Wayne Shorter and Brandford Marsalis (saxophone); Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard and Wynton Marsalis (trumpet);

Horace Silver and Keith Jarrett (piano); and Chuck Mangione (French horn, flugel horn) — all legends in their own right.

The fact that Blakey's sidemen tend to become stars themselves accounts for the rapid turnover in Messenger personnel. The current lineup consists of Terrance Blanchard on trumpet, Donald Harrison on alto sax, Jean Toussaint on tenor sax, Johnny O'Neil on piano and Lonnie Plaxico on bass. All the musicians are in their early- to mid-twenties.

"Come and hear these kids," Blakey says. "When they become stars, people will say 'Ooh!' but it was there all the time."

At the very essence of the combo, however, is Blakey's phenomenal technique; ranging from gossamer cymbal strokes to locomotive bass thundercracks and snare detonations. His command is absolute, his

Continued on Page 2B