

Speakers Bureau thrives

By Alice Tallmadge
and Cynthia Whitfield
Of the Emerald

It's been four years since injuries from a serious bicycle accident led George Beres to leave his hectic job as University sports information director to head what is now the quickly growing Speakers Bureau.

Beres needed a change of pace while recuperating from the accident, and at the suggestion of Curt Simic, former vice president of University relations, he moved from sports to his present position as Speakers Bureau director. He is also editor of the faculty staff newsletter and "tip sheet" — a capsule of University-related stories distributed to the media.

"I had been working in sports (here and at other Universities) for 20 years," says the Chicago-born Beres. "I went back to work before I had recuperated and found the stress level in sports hard to deal with.

"I still love sports, but now, because of the Speakers Bureau, I've found out there's areas of the University that are just as exciting," Beres says.

The Speakers Bureau is housed in Johnson Hall's campus public relations department, the News and Information Services. Beres noted the department did not have a "comprehensive" system for handling requests from the community for University speakers. "I became interested in building it (the Speakers Bureau) into something."

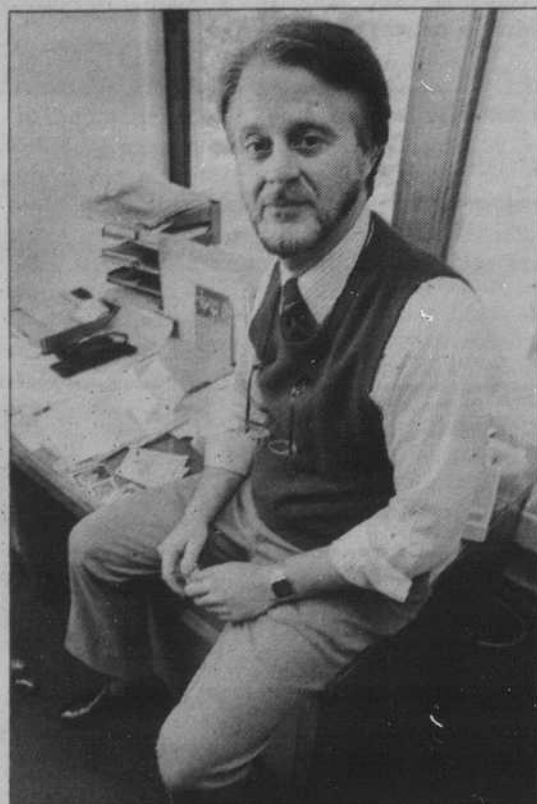
After Beres compiled a directory of University faculty and staff willing to speak on a variety of topics

to groups in the Eugene-Springfield area, he wrote and distributed a brochure describing the project throughout the area. The purpose was to better establish the Speakers Bureau as an intermediary between the informational needs of the community and the resources of University faculty and staff, Beres says.

"We now have a directory of some 300 topics and 200 professors, and we keep adding to our file-card list. Next year, I expect at least 500 topic listings," he says.

Until recently, the University had no organized outreach program into the community involving personal appearances by faculty and staff. The absence of a well-defined public identity led some people to think of the University as a "cloistered area of eggheads, activists and extremists," Beres says.

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George Beres

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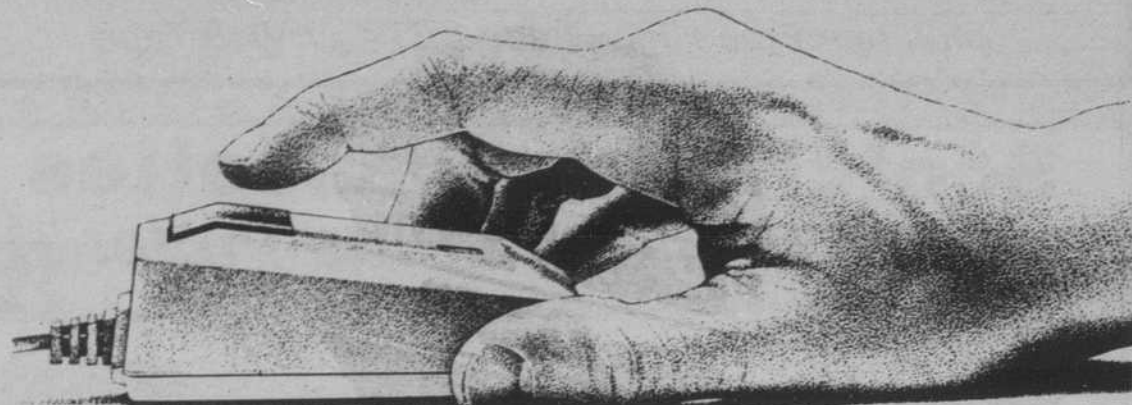
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