

Keeping our streets clean

USBA tackles trash on 13th Avenue

By Mark Stanic
Of the Emerald

For many students the shops and restaurants along 13th Avenue are as much a part of the campus as classrooms. Yet while strolling down the streets and talking with friends, students probably don't think much about the clean sidewalks and well-lit streets, which are a result of the efforts of West University Small Business Association.

For area merchants such as Jamie Douglas, 13th Avenue is their living — and their life. In

1980, West University merchants joined together to form the University Small Business Association to take care of the street.

"It took us about a year and a half to get organized simply because we didn't know what we were doing," says Vice President Jamie Douglas.

About one-half of the businesses along the 13th Avenue strip and adjacent streets, including 7-11, Sacred Heart Hospital, Kinko's Copies, Poppi's and others, are members of the association.

It began when a plan to expand the University Bookstore had merchants afraid that "it would encroach so badly into their areas that they would be eliminated," Douglas says.

The bookstore dropped its expansion plans and five months later became a member of the association. Since that time the businesses have all worked together to promote common interests.

Douglas says the goals of the organization are to promote the area, aid in the beautification and safety projects along 13th Avenue, and to sponsor special sports events, such as a decathlon-style relay coming up in the spring.

In the past couple of years the association has helped to install trash cans that line the street and to preserve streetlights that brighten the night.

The trash cans were a joint project with the West University Neighbors Association. Douglas says that the neighbors association bought the cans and then each merchant "adopted" a trash can to take care of and empty at the end of each business day.

The streetlights originally caused quite a bit of controversy, Douglas says. In 1983 the city of Eugene wanted to take the tops off the streetlamps and replace the traditional globes with high-pressure sodium lights. But the business owners did not consider the high-tech, greenish-yellow hue of the sodium lights appropriate.

They prevailed on the city to keep the old street lights. Ever since, merchants in the area have maintained the lights themselves, keeping stepladders handy in the back of their shops to go out and replace burned-out bulbs.

Last spring the association became embroiled in another controversy when they attempt-

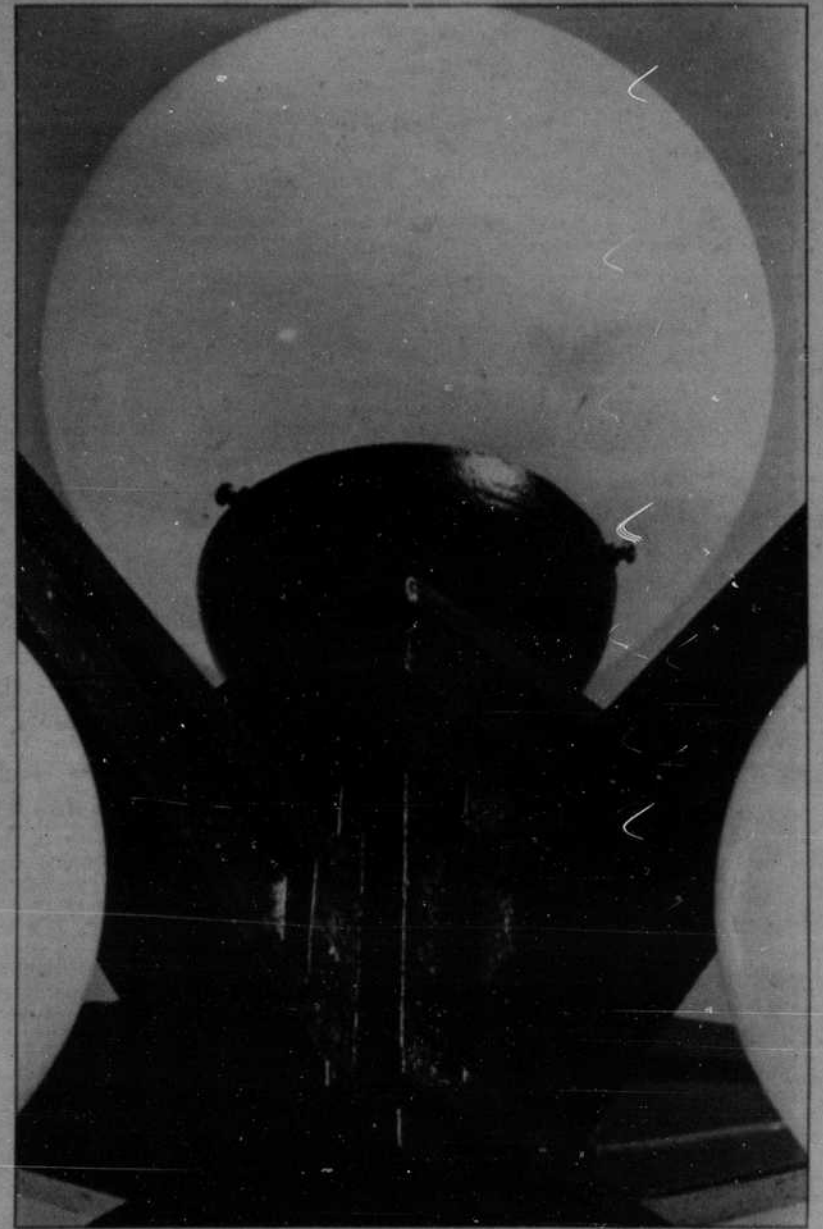


Photo by Hank Trotter

The old fashioned streetlamps that line 13th Avenue are maintained by the West University Small Business Association. Area merchants replace burned-out bulbs and recently had the lamp-posts painted.

Small Business Association took its complaints to the City Council.

After three months of controversy, the Council in May finally changed the ordinance to limit the number of street

ferent events like running, bicycling and boating." Douglas expects to run the event next spring and hopes it will become an annual affair.

A less happy annual event is the yearly pilgrimage of transients into the University area.

"Eugene has gotten a reputation in the transient grapevine as being a very receptive area," Douglas says. The business association is beginning the fact finding phase of a study to determine if anything can be done about the problem, which Douglas says is hurting the area and keeping people away from West University businesses.

Most of the West University merchants are "just hanging in there," Douglas says. University business areas are victim to seasonal slumps and poor parking availability that make them unattractive to shoppers outside the area.

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—Jamie Douglas

ted to limit the number of street vendors along Kincaid Street. Since the city had enacted an experimental ordinance to allow street vendors, five street carts began selling their wares on the corner of 13th Avenue and Kincaid Street.

The merchants were upset by the congestion, the extra trash and what they called unfair competition. So, the University

vendors in the area to one per corner, and mandated the carts set up no closer than 150 feet to a business that sells food. Now there are two street vendors where there once was five.

A less controversial project is a plan to sponsor a community athletic event. Although the details are not worked out yet, Douglas says it will be "like a relay and would involve dif-

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