

Crew maintains campus beauty

Keeping the summertime grass green

By Frale de Guzman
Of the Emerald

Maintaining green lawns so University students can sunbathe between classes and pruning trees that provide shade from Eugene's summer heat are some of the campus maintenance crew's duties, says Ted King, landscape maintenance supervisor.

Twenty-two workers, nine full-time and 13 students, are employed to maintain the well-kept appearance of the University grounds during the summer. The Looking Glass Program, a federally funded program that aids the mentally disabled, provides additional summer help, bringing the total number of workers to 30, King says.

The number of workers decreases to 11 full-time and three student workers during the regular academic year because of a drop in necessary maintenance, King adds.

In the summertime the workload is substantially higher because the lawns require greater watering and more care. And maintenance workers also must clean and do repairs in all the vacant dormitory rooms.

The job of the maintenance crew is wide and varied. Workers do everything from trimming and weeding lawns to digging trenches, planting trees and setting lawn sprinklers. They also pick up litter, King says.

All this costs the University \$282,000 a year, which covers employee salaries, supplies and maintenance equipment. Because of budget cuts, funding has stayed constant for the past several years, he adds.

Yet despite cut backs, gradual improvements are being made in the campus environment. Workers are playing more of an active role in the maintenance of tree life by replacing stumps and dead trees with young trees that have been donated to the University by community members, King says.

"It's a beautiful campus and the crew members

have a strong interest in actively maintaining the grounds," King says.

One way the University has attempted to combat the effects of fewer workers has been to invest in better equipment that is making the job easier and more efficient. Some underground sprinklers and advanced machinery, such as power mowers and electric shears, have been implemented, says Harold Babcock, physical plant director.

Workers appear to welcome the replacement of old equipment with more modernized machinery, Babcock adds.

"Any new change that makes the job easier, I'm all for," says Craig Swalling, an architecture major who has worked with campus maintenance for one year.

The grounds of the University are maintained not just for aesthetic reasons, but for a functional purpose as well, says Ted Burns, assistant director for services.

"It's nice to go out and relax on cool, green lawns and know that somebody cares about the way it looks," Burns says.

And he believes that a well-maintained campus attracts more people here and thus makes people more willing to support the University through donations.

The University grounds are maintained to adhere to Oregon's "green" image and for its historical value, says Hana Lee, a graduate student in landscape architecture who has worked with campus maintenance for one and a half years.

"People want to see the lush, green environmental image of Oregon reflected at the University," Lee says. "Some appreciate the University's history and want to see the older sections maintained as a connection between the past and the future."

And Lee does not mind doing the hard work necessary to keep the grounds lush.

"Working outside gives you the opportunity to get away from the closed indoor feeling," Lee says. "Also, the hard work makes you feel good."



Photo by Karen Stallwood

Mark Palanuk, a maintenance worker from the Looking Glass Program, strives to keep University grounds lush and green.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'Beyond Thunderdome' is adventurous fun

"A lone warrior searching for his destiny," the lobby poster read, seeming to allude to an epic plot. My imagination echoed Charlton Heston, John Boorman movies and "The Seven Samurai" by Akira Kurosawa. "A tribe of lost children waiting for a hero" (Steven Spielberg, eat your heart out) "In a world battling to survive, they face a woman determined to rule" Heavy stuff, I thought to myself. Then came the punch: "Hold out for Mad Max. This is his greatest adventure."

Wait a minute. Mad Max? The Road Warrior? I'm about as fond of those movies as I am of the Cannonball Run series. Then again, there was something different about this one it seemed. Sure, there was going to be the typical high-speed race of death through the desert; it wouldn't be Mad Max without it. And yeah, it probably would have the random repertoire of odd, inane, wordless post-holocaust punk-folk whose main purpose is to show off the neat hardware of the savage land.

Still, there was a feeling of substance to this one. Tina Turner was too shrewd a performer to wander through a car chase. And Mel Gibson has advanced too far in his career to grimly leer, sneer and yell his way in and out of brawls and freaky crowds. My hard-earned

respect for both of them, along with the security of a second director to share the chores of filmmaker George Miller, told me to take the chance. "Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome" was well worth that chance.

Clearly, Max's world hasn't changed much since "The Road Warrior," but I was pleasantly surprised to find that Miller and his co-hort, George Ogilvie, have developed it more, fleshing it out to create an entirely new and different culture, a whole new mythology.

It is a visual feast; the gags and strange structures work well, placing the audience right in the middle of the brave new society Max calls home. There is the dive-bombing airplane pilot from the last installment. There is a hilarious multi-levelled fuel refinery (I use the term loosely). There is Master Blaster, a huge human wrecking machine, complete with a controlling driver harnessed in a cage on his back. There is Tina Turner as the street-smart nobody who became a somebody named Auntie Entity.

And, as Entity throws open her arms ("Welcome to the latest edition of Thunderdome"), viewers are treated to one of the most bizarre arena combats in film history. The participants must leap and fly about the interior of a dome framework, suspended by flexi-

ble cords, which they use to reach various weapons secured about the dome.

Needless to say, Max escapes the danger of Thunderdome, which isn't giving anything away since it happens too soon in the film to generate suspense. If Max really wasn't going to make it, it would be a short movie indeed.

Max finds a tribe of lost children, leads them out of their lush, green paradise and into his rugged world.

Again, to do otherwise and remain in paradise would deprive Max and the viewer the

excitement of his violent, often nihilistic environment. There are at least three very solid stories running in and out of "Beyond Thunderdome," but they are so disjointed, and episodic that there is an inadvertent denial to explore any one of them. Instead, the action-packed race formats pull the plots along, and the audience is resolved to be carried along with it.

Perhaps it's for the best that I stopped trying to find some kind of coherent, unifying meaning to the continuous sub-plotting of Miller and co-writer Terry Hayes' screenplay.

Perhaps, as my former room-

mate suggested, the point of it all is that it's absurd to think about the meaning of anything in a post-holocaust world. So you keep moving, unless you want to go north and play "Quintet" with a few paranoid existentialists.

"Beyond Thunderdome" is high adventure at some of its unpretentious best; it's fun to watch, it's simple to follow, and it's less expensive than pizza and beer.

You can see it at the Valley River Twin and Springfield cinemas.

By John Bock

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