

Bike-Aid helps poor

By Scott Wyland
Emerald Contributor

In an effort to raise funds to battle global poverty, cyclists from all over North America will prime their wheels next June and pedal across the entire continent, ultimately converging in Washington, D.C.

The Overseas Development Network (ODN) is sponsoring its fourth annual transcontinental bike-a-thon (Bike-Aid), which will last about 60 days. Cyclists will come from Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Austin, and ODN invites all who are interested in adventure, meeting people and helping the hungry to participate.

The ODN suggests that applicants be fit enough to bike 70 miles a day in summer heat and be concerned enough with the issue of global poverty to do volunteer work en route, such as working at a food bank or speaking at a community forum.

Jennifer Tilson, a Portland high school student who participated in Bike-Aid last year, said concern for global hunger is a more crucial qualification for a cyclist than physical conditioning.

Tilson said she hardly trained for the bike-a-thon and was even weakened by a recent case of mononucleosis, which was serious enough to force her to take the shorter Austin, Texas route.

"It's a lot more mental than physical," Tilson said. "Everybody goes into it thinking that everybody else

is the excellent biker. After two weeks you find out that nobody is. Everybody is about the same."

Before the trip, an orientation is given to all entrants to allow them a chance to get acquainted with ODN staff members and fellow riders. Along the course cyclists ride in pairs, and two ODN co-leaders trained in first aid drive vans along side the riders in case injury or exhaustion occurs.

Tilson said serious fatigue generally is avoided because the riders set their own pace. "We usually started early, rode all morning and took a long lunch through the hottest time of the day. Then we'd ride in the early evening if we had to."

The riders receive one rest day a week, but even these are not leisurely. It is the time used for an array of volunteer services, according to Tilson.

Out of all her activities, Tilson said the most exciting involved talking to people in Alabama who had marched from Selma to Montgomery in one of the great civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s. The next day her group rode 50 miles to the church where Martin Luther King Jr. gave many of his famous speeches.

Cyclists are responsible for their own food and transportation back from Washington, D.C. The application deadline is Feb. 15 and the entrance fee is \$75, although in some cases the fee is waived to encourage the underprivileged to participate. For an application, call (415)-725-2869.

Kakegawa looks for Eugene land

By Greg Hough
Emerald Reporter

There were more questions than answers at a Tuesday meeting of the Eugene-Kakegawa Sister City Committee, as the group considered the possibility of its Japanese ally purchasing farm land for development in this area.

Committee member Gretchen Gross works for Jean Tate Real Estate in Eugene and is negotiating with political and business leaders in Kakegawa to find suitable acreage.

Adriana Guistana, who heads the volunteer committee, said all she knew of Kakegawa's intentions was that its leaders were seeking land for "educational development."

"The Japanese do things very slowly," Guistana said. "They'll want to take their time doing checks and double-checks."

Gross and Guistana were two of 18 who attended Tuesday's meeting at the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services office downtown. Gross told the group Kakegawa leaders have been interested in purchasing

land in the Eugene area for more than a year.

"Last December (in 1987), probably the most likely property that was available for them to use had other buyers interested in it," Gross said. "And I communicated that with the mayor (Junichi Shinmura), and they sent back a message saying 'Sorry, we're not quite ready — we'll have to pass on this one.'"

"The next communication was the first week of June. They wanted to find out about... certain properties, about permits, or an office, or a machine shed, or a meeting room, or dormitories, or a kitchen big enough to cook for 25 people."

Gross said that of the three pieces of property she and Kakegawa leaders have considered since June, two have been sold. The third, a 200-acre site near Junction City, is still available, but Gross said she wanted to find additional properties to show to a group of prominent Kakegawa residents, including Mayor Shinmura. The delegation will visit Eugene Feb. 17-20.

"The mayor was here before, three years ago," Sister City Administrator Mary McIntosh said. "My impression is that he's bringing 15 people with him, and most of these are business people who will look at land and provide financial backing."

How to deal with the visit was a major source of discussion at the meeting. Guistana said Eugene Mayor Jeff Miller and former Mayor Brian Obie had agreed to meet the Kakegawa group soon after its arrival.

Gross suggested the opening reception should take place a day after the Japanese arrive at Mahlon Sweet Airport at approximately 2 p.m. on Feb. 17. She also suggested a dinner be held for the contingent.

Committee Vice-Chairman Greg Moore said he thought one "big" reception would do, and that a reception and a dinner would be too expensive.

Guistana said that no final decisions should be made until the committee meets again next week.

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