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## Six students receive high honors

By Darla Jackson  
Emerald Supplements Editor

These people must be study fanatics, right? To graduate from college with at least a 3.90 grade point average while taking a wide range of upper-division courses must mean these students are either gluttons for punishment or they have superhuman academic capabilities. Right? Wrong.

Each year Phi Beta Kappa, the liberal arts honor society, chooses six graduating seniors from the University to be named the Phi Beta Kappa Oregon Six. The society elects the group based on the students' academic record, breadth of upper-division liberal arts credits and faculty recommendations.

This year, four women and two men were chosen for the honor, and their major fields of study range from English to chemistry to Russian studies.

Not one of these students fit the "bookworm" stereotype, and they have different opinions about how they reached the academic level they are at now.

Sheri Merkhofer, one of the recipients of the Phi Beta Kappa honor, will graduate with a degree in Russian studies and will eventually receive a French degree. Merkhofer said that when she started attending college four years ago, she was afraid of getting lost in the crowd because of the University's size. However, she enrolled in the Honors College and was pleased to discover that most classes are limited to 25 people.

"The Honors College wants you to have a really broad based liberal arts education," she said. "You have more requirements and you have to write a senior thesis, but the teachers are able to give you special attention when you need it."

Merkhofer, who has a grade

point average of 3.9, said she has taken upper-division courses in subjects such as geography, literature, math and history. She said she was "extremely surprised and pleased" to learn she was chosen as one of the Oregon Six, and she feels the effort it took to do well in school was worth it.

"I've worked hard in school all my life, and I was told it would pay off, but at times it was frustrating," she said. "I feel like someone has finally noticed this hard work I've done."

Merkhofer plans to go to the Soviet Union on an exchange program in September. To be chosen for the program, Merkhofer had to write an essay in English and in Russian, take an exam and speak in Russian over the phone for an interview. She hopes to apply her experience in the Soviet Union to her eventual goal, which is a career in simultaneous translating.

"The classes I've had in Russian have been extremely rewarding," she said. "When I get to translate for people, I feel like I'm this bridge connecting two cultures that may not have been connected otherwise."

Jerry Scott, who will receive a degree in chemistry and biochemistry, said he feels honored to be chosen a member of the Oregon Six.

"My aunt got the award when she was in school here, and my grandfather always bragged about it to me," Scott said. "Now I don't have to listen to him brag anymore."

Scott said that while he feels he received a quality education from the University, "it's really up to the individual to get the education he wants." Scott will graduate with a grade point average of 3.94, and has taken upper-division

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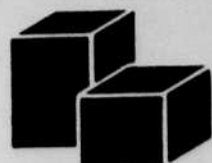
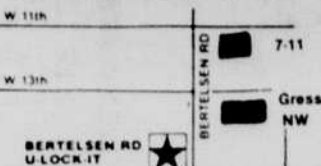
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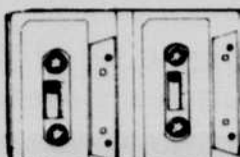
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