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Students express mixed emotions to Mandela's release

By Pat Malach
Emerald Contributor

This weekend's release of imprisoned African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela from a South African jail has stirred a mixture of emotions among students on campus.

Nithi Muthukrishna, a South African who has been studying at the University since fall 1989, said Mandela's release after 27 years in prison was an emotional experience for her.

"I was happy and jubilant, but there was a kind of a sadness as well," Muthukrishna said. "For 27 years the country was deprived of a leader that could have taken it forward."

"(The release) was a time for celebration, but there has to be moderation as well," she added. "It was only a beginning in the process. We've got a long road ahead."

Muthukrishna, who is of Indian descent, came to the United States from her home town of Durban as part of a student exchange program called the U.S. South Africa Program. The program, established to promote the education of black South Africans, is sponsored by United States universities and companies, Muthukrishna said.

This is also the time to remember others from the anti-apartheid movement, she added.

"We must never forget all those that paid the supreme sacrifice in the struggle - the Steve Bikos, the people that were sentenced to death for treason and people that died in police custody," she said.

Members of Students Against Apartheid echoed Muthukrishna's reluctance to celebrate too much.

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Looking good

Leslie Ware uses her spare time to work on a painting in a studio in Lawrence Hall. Ware is a junior majoring in fine arts.

Photo by Elisa Lichtman

Students push boycott of U.S.-grown grapes

By Jolie Andrade
Emerald Reporter

MEChA will pursue its boycott of grapes grown in California and elsewhere in the United States even though campus food service representatives say the grapes rarely are served at the University.

"It doesn't matter how much is being purchased," said Eddie Beanes, MEChA director. "It's the fact that the campus is actually purchasing grapes."

"Until they stop purchasing grapes, they're still contributing to what we're trying to fight for - for our people's rights," Beanes said.

MEChA is among many organizations nationwide encouraging the boycott of domestic grapes on the grounds that grape workers are exposed to dangerous pesticides.

Purchasing grapes, even from outside the U.S., contributes to market demand, continuing the exploitation of the grape workers, Beanes said.

Beanes said the University should follow the lead of the Eugene 4-J school district, which has banned grapes completely from their food services.

University food service representatives said they are not serving the boycotted grapes and offered alternative solutions to the problem.

Chef Joan MacDonald said the Faculty Club stopped serving American grapes several years ago.

"We use Chilean grapes only and don't serve grapes at all, otherwise," MacDonald said, adding that she supports the grape boycott.

Dennis Carr, EMU food service director, and Fred Babcock, food director for the residence halls, said they rarely purchase grapes because of high prices and lack of demand.

Not many of the EMU catering's customers ask for grapes when they order fruit trays, Carr said.

"It's the third, fourth, sometimes fifth item they prefer in terms of taste," Carr said.

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Insurance will go to a vote

By Catherine Hawley
Emerald Associate Editor

Students will choose the kind of insurance program the University will offer by voting on an ASUO ballot measure in May. President Andy Clark announced at a Student Health Insurance Committee meeting Monday.

Clark said he decided to put the insurance issue to a vote in response to a petition signed by about 30 University students requesting Clark and vice president Scott Wyckoff to allow students to choose the type of health insurance they want.

Controversy over student health insurance has run high since SHIC members recommended mandatory insurance in December in an effort to alleviate spiralling insurance rates for students now enrolled in the ASUO's voluntary program.

Students will probably vote for one of three insurance options on the May ballot: mandatory coverage, mandatory coverage with a waiver or voluntary coverage, Clark said.

"Now that students know it's going to be on the ballot, they should divide into three camps," supporting each of

the three options, Clark said. The debate over mandatory vs. voluntary health insurance will not likely subside now.



Scott Wyckoff

that students have the opportunity to vote on the issue, and a big turnout is still expected at tonight's health insurance forum, said Wyckoff, SHIC chairman.

"We expect an excellent turnout, 150 to 200 people," Wyckoff said.

The forum, to be held in 150 Columbia at 7 p.m., will give students the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the three types of plans,

different waiver options and SHIC procedures.

"I hope that it doesn't turn into a mob mentality for people to go off on mandatory insurance. I hope people come with an open mind, willing to listen," Wyckoff said.

Both Wyckoff and Clark said they continue to support mandatory insurance as the best way to provide affordable coverage to all students.

However, any decision made by SHIC or by University students on the insurance issue might have only short-term implications if the state system of higher education decides to devise its own insurance policy for all Oregon universities.

The University's struggle to come up with a fair, affordable insurance plan for students has re-ignited the state board's interest in forming its own student health insurance system, said Bill Lemman, OSSHE executive vice chancellor.

Although the board has no specific plans for addressing the insurance issue right now, members will probably discuss the possibility of forming a statewide insurance system in the next week or two, Lemman said.