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Students to step it up Saturday night

□ Competition to feature mix of traditional African and modern dance

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Associate Editor

Traditional African tribal dancing melds with modern dance and music this weekend when the University hosts its first stepping competition. Members of a black fraternity and sorority on campus are going up against teams from three other universities.

The event takes place in the EMU Ballroom Saturday at 8 p.m. and includes a dance for everyone followed by performances and judging of the competing teams. Tickets are \$6 at the door.

Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority each have teams competing for the chance to go to the western regionals at UC Davis in May.

Hugh Green of Kappa Alpha Psi said the tradition of stepping is something most black fraternities and sororities take part in.

"Stepping originated from an African tribe and they were a tribe that danced with sticks," he said. Green's team will dance with canes in keeping with that style.

"It was a tribal dance for celebration ... and it's based around black unity," Green said.

Lisa Lawrence of Alpha Kappa Alpha said her team has been working for about a month on their dance.

"Ours is a combination of modern dance along with traditional stepping," Lawrence said. "We try to keep the traditional hand-slapping and foot-stomping, but we like to include modern dance."

Although this is the first time University teams are competing for a chance to go to the regionals and nationals, fraternities and so-



James Jessie (front) and Sean Burwell of Kappa Alpha Psi perfect their stepping moves Wednesday night for this weekend's competition.

rorities here have had competitions among themselves.

"We've been stepping at this school since the late '80s, but it's been happening ever since black fraternities were started in the 1900s," Green said.

Teams from Oregon State University, Oregon Institute of Technology and UC Davis will be here Saturday.

A judging committee made up of University professors will decide the winning team.

The dance is from 8 to 10 p.m. followed by the competition. The judging will begin around midnight followed by more of the audience dance.

Green and Lawrence are both competing for the first time, but Lawrence has seen competitions before and knows what the crowd is in for.

"They can expect to be pumped up and energized," she said. "When I've been in the audience, it's been really exciting."

Amazon Housing rapped in report

□ Architectural firm recommends that use of the family homes end by 1996

By Carrie Dennett
Emerald Associate Editor

A report commissioned by the University states it is time to "bite the bullet" and commit to not using Amazon Family Housing facilities beyond the 1996 school year.

University President Myles Brand requested the report on Jan. 17 to assess the safety of the complex. The report was compiled by the architectural firm of Martin, Schultz & Geyer, AIA.

In a Wednesday night meeting to discuss the housing issue, Brand met with University Planner Chris Ramey; Jan Oliver, assistant vice president for institutional affairs; state Sen. Bill Dwyer; and Scott Bartlett, Dwyer's legislative assistant.

According to the University News Bureau, Brand is expected to announce today how the University will proceed with off-campus housing construction, at Amazon and at other sites.

Fire hazards are the greatest safety concern, according to the Jan. 24 report. Author Michael Geyer wrote, "The buildings clearly do not meet current code with respect to fire separation between living units."

According to the report, fire safety in the existing buildings cannot be sufficiently improved, so even efforts to provide an effective fire alarm system do not solve the problem.

The 1996 time line was based on the poor physical condition of the entire Amazon facility as well as the poor quality of resident life.

The physical deficiencies plague all building areas. Poor soil drainage has caused wet rot, attracted "undesirable animal life" and caused the wall separating living units to drop away from the ceiling and roof structures by as much as 4 inches.

Roofing quality has been an ongoing problem. In the report, Geyer said, "Because of moisture infiltration and loss of any structural integrity, I am told the physical plant personnel refuse to even walk on those roofs."

Skunks and possum live under the buildings, and rats, mice and cockroaches are a common problem inside the living units. Asbestos materials are still in place.

The proximity and poor quality of sewer and water lines mean that water quality is jeopardized. The build-

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El Nino credited for warmer weather

□ Ocean current often linked with catastrophe instead brings unseasonal warm spell to Northwest

By Josh Englander
Emerald Contributor

Students toss frisbees and lounge on the lawns. Passersby stroll between classes, basking in the mild afternoon. Cherry blossoms peek their eyes to see if the sun is for real. Something is different about this winter.

The ocean current known as El Nino is back, poised to disrupt weather patterns in the Northwest and across the globe.

A massive strip of warm water has formed in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, setting in motion the unusual climactic events associated with El Nino. For the Northwest, this means abnormal dryness and mild temperatures.

"Eugene is already feeling the effects," said John Fischer, KEZI-TV meteorologist. "We are getting some rain, but not as much as usual and it's unseasonably warm."

Wednesday's temperature of 64 degrees tied a record high, and only four inches of rain fell on Eugene this month, half the January average.

University students have had the strange opportunity to wander campus in the dead of winter wearing T-shirts. Even the late January nights have surprised Eu-

gene residents with a mysterious warm breeze.

The rest of the world has traditionally felt an angrier wrath of El Nino. The El Nino of 1982-83 caused severe droughts in Australia and the Philippines, torrential rains in Ecuador and Peru, and vicious storms that pummeled the California coast.

That El Nino system was thought by some scientists to be the worst natural catastrophe of the century, claiming approximately 1,500 lives and inflicting \$2 billion to \$8 billion dollars worth of damage on the hardest hit areas.

The El Nino of 1992 is not expected to be as severe. "This one is probably a low-grade, moderate El Nino that should last until March or April," Fischer said. "Theoretically, this should mean a warmer and dryer winter for Oregon."

The cause of the warm weather is traced to the current of warm water seeping up from the south.

"The warming in the mid-Pacific affects the flow of the jet stream and pushes the storms we'd normally be getting this time of year to the north," Fischer said.

An effect that scientists have associated with El Nino is the increase in ocean temperatures. In the eastern Pacific, the temperatures are two degrees warmer than usual. The 1982-83 El Nino caused a five-degree increase.

Scientists have been able to study only 10 El Ninos this century. They occur generally every five or six

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FREAK-OUT

Primus and Love on Ice: thrash-funk to twisted be-bop metal to loony tunes. Check it out!

See ENT, Page 5

JUST A REMINDER...

Today is the deadline for doctoral final oral defense applications to be submitted to the Graduate School, 125 Chapman.



COACH

The women's basketball team has a new face on the sidelines.

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