

Coordinator leads crusade against garbage

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Associate Editor

On Franklin Boulevard next to a duck pond is the University's Physical Plant, a place of physical labor with a reputation for being more conservative than other campus areas.

Buzzing around the place — with its army-green warehouses, vans and big trucks — is a short, determined woman who gets noticed.

Usually dressed in Birkenstocks or river sandals, rayon sundresses and other earthy attire, Karyn Kaplan, 36, is a recycling crusader and a well-known, accepted figure.

But when she first signed on as the University's first, official recycling education and promotions coordinator, she didn't exactly fit in there.

"I'm running around with all these outfits and shorts. I was a novelty," she said. "Recycling — they thought it was a big joke."

Now, she says, she has a good relationship with "the

guys." Just as she has made a place for herself there, she just as smoothly established a campus recycling program out of the ashes of apathy.

In a short time of three years, this person with a grudge against garbage has turned a major university that did very little recycling into a model for the country.

Kaplan received the University's 1992 Classified Employees Recognition Award from President Myles Brand. He thanked her for her efforts, which led to the University's receiving an award for the state's best recycling program.

After graduating from the University in 1977, Kaplan was a ski bum for several years, traveling through Africa, Europe and the United States. She had fun, figured out what she wanted to do with her life and returned to school in the late 1980s.

Now a graduate student studying science education, Kaplan said she came back to Eugene for two reasons. "I



Recycling events on campus aim at increasing consumer awareness. File photo

could ride my bicycle everywhere and I could recycle," she said.

Not many people would choose a place to live based on whether they could recycle. But then, not many people are like Kaplan.

Trail Blazers fans act this way when the Blazers win a game. Academics act this way

when they find out they made the Dean's List.

The "way" is an almost crazed enthusiasm Kaplan shows when she gets to talking about how she got involved in what is honestly nothing less than a crusade.

"I was working as a custodi-

Turn to RECYCLE, Page 26A



"Should I see
The Neville
Brothers in
Rio. Or Trashcan
Sinatras in Tokyo.
I can't deal
with all these
decisions. Yeah,
right."

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