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Gerlinger Field needs year off; drainage problem continues

By Scott Simonson
Emerald Contributor

England has Stonehenge, the South Pacific has Easter Island, and Nashville has country music.

Each corner of the world has its own mysterious and unexplained phenomena.

The University campus has Gerlinger Field.

For more than two years, the field located between Gerlinger Hall, Gerlinger Annex and the Pioneer Cemetery has been off-limits almost year-round. A sign that reads "Closed for renovation/rest" stands in the middle of the space — despite the field appearing quite normal.

But Gerlinger Field is not closed for renovations. It's not the result of bureaucratic mismanagement. It's not even a government cover-up.

University Physical Plant Director Ted Burns said the field is just "resting."

The field is closed, Burns said, because continued use could cause permanent damage to the field or injury to students using it.

Poor drainage under the field causes soft ground that is easily torn up and slowly repaired, he said.

"It's a real old field that doesn't take drainage very well. Water just sits in there," Burns said.

Burns said the field's drainage problem is caused by a combination of a high amount of clay in the soil and an outdated drainage system. When Gerlinger Annex was built, he said, the field was left largely without a place to drain.

The field closes every year after a couple of weeks of use

'It's a real old field that doesn't take drainage very well.'

— Ted Burns,
University Physical Plant
Director

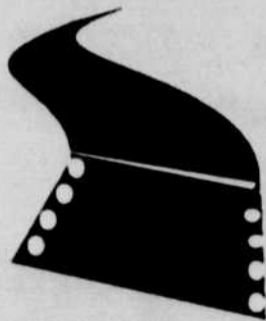
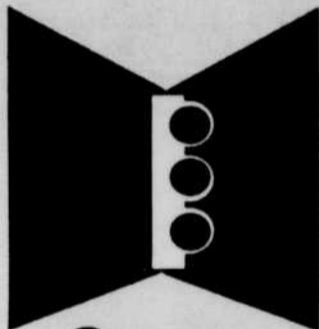
during fall term. Time is required for the field to heal itself, which it does slowly, especially during the winter, Burns said.

While the field could be improved with a more modern drainage system like those at the University's soccer field or the new field south of the Knight Library, he said that such an improvement is unlikely.

"You can do anything if you have the money, but right now we don't," Burns said.

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