

Herbarium curator must say goodbye to University

By Demian McLean
Emerald Reporter

In 1988, University biology Professor David Wagner was wanted by the police. But in this case, Wagner was on the right side of the law.

Eugene police were investigating a child molestation case and had reached an impasse. The young victim could identify her assailant, but she was too young to testify in court. The strongest evidence police had were a few pieces of moss combed from the girl's hair. That's when they called in Wagner.

Drawing on his years as a botanist, Wagner identified the two-millimeter moss strands as *Brachythecium Asperimum*, a type found at the crime scene. Using a microscope, Wagner matched the moss to identical strands found in the male suspect's underwear. Police confronted their suspect with this evidence, and he confessed to the crime.

Today, local officials and researchers still call Wagner occasionally with questions about moss and other flora, but that will soon change. In keeping with the latest round of Measure 5 cuts, Wagner will lose his position as assistant professor June 15 when the University closes its herbarium, a 90-year-old historical museum of Northwest plants.

Unlike other biology professors, Wagner received his associate professorship in recognition of his work as herbarium curator. Like many administrators, his contract came up for renewal this summer.

Since Wagner came to the University in 1976, his mission has been to educate the public about plants. Each

spring for the last 17 years, he has guided weekly nature walks through Alton Baker Park to study newly blooming flowers. This March, Wagner will offer the last of those free public walks.

"When I first came to the University, I realized that it'd be easy to get stuck at my desk. I made a commitment to get out of the office once a week and learn the local flora," Wagner said.

Dee Grissell, who supervises Alton Baker Park for Eugene Parks and Recreation, said Wagner's group of 10 to 12 people were a common sight in Alton Baker Park during the spring.

"They made checkoff lists of wildflowers, and Wagner formed work parties on the weekends to clear ivy from existing ground cover," Grissell said. "I think he opened a lot of people's minds; he will be sorely missed."

At the University's herbarium, Wagner cares for more than 120,000 specimens of dried and pressed plants dating back to the 1800s. In a small building by the Eugene Millrace, he fields questions from botanical researchers around the state. They call to inquire about species identification or settle questions about geographical distribution of rare plants.

Wagner has also heightened people's awareness of plants on a state level. In 1979, Wagner and two other state botanists compiled a list of Oregon's rare and endangered plants. The list was the first of its kind, and it paved the way for a 1987 state endangered species act that protected plants.

Robert Meinke, leader of the state's Plant Conservation Biology program, said Wagner and his co-author's report highlighted the need for studying rare plants.

"When the federal Endangered Species Act first

'I made a commitment to get out of the office once a week and learn the local flora.'

— David Wagner,
University herbarium curator

passed, there were virtually no botanists working for the state," he said. "(Wagner's) list led to a number of masters and Ph.D projects on rare plants."

For now, Wagner's efforts are focused on packing up the herbarium's thousands of pressed plants.

"You can't just close up an herbarium and walk away," he said. "You have to make sure there's a plan to take care of the specimens."

During the past two years, Wagner has been negotiating with Oregon State University to take the collection. This year, the school agreed. The University's collection will be transferred to Oregon State's herbarium, the state's sole remaining herbarium.

Wagner's future is less certain. "Because I work with the environment, I have a commitment to place, as opposed to career," he said. "I just haven't applied to jobs in Southern California; my skills are related to 20-plus years in the Northwest."

Meinke was optimistic about Wagner's future in the Northwest.

"Once you've got as much background and meaningful contributions as he has, there should be a place for him," he said.

\$1.3 million scholarship program to be cut

By Sarah Clark
Emerald Reporter

For most University students, 1990's Ballot Measure 5 has meant higher tuition, fewer faculty members and fewer course choices. And for about 100 University students, it will also mean losing their scholarships.

Some students receive about \$836 per year in state money through the Oregon State Scholarship Commission, said Edmond Vignoul, director of University financial aid.

But the scholarship commission will soon lose one of its state-funded scholarship programs because Measure 5 has forced state agencies to cut 20 percent of their budgets, said Jim Beyer, grant program director for the commission.

Currently, the program serves 127 Univer-

sity students, Vignoul said. About 100 of them would have been eligible for renewal next year, Beyer said.

The scholarships are renewable for up to four years. They are awarded mainly for merit, but recipients must show some financial need, Beyer said.

If the program hadn't been cut, it would have provided more than 1,500 Oregon high school graduates with about \$1.3 million in scholarships each year, Beyer said.

The commission's other major state-funded program will not be cut, Beyer said, but it won't get as much money added to its 1993-95 budget as it has in the past.

The Need Grant Program, which gives more than 20,000 Oregon residents \$21.6 million in state-funded, need-based scholarships, will increase its budget less than 1

percent during 1993-95, Beyer said. Normally, the budget would increase about 7 percent, he said.

This means that fewer students will receive awards, Beyer said. The commission is reluctant to lower award amounts and serve more students, he said, because awards have already lost much of their worth as costs of education have soared.

Ten years ago, resident University students could receive up to \$708 through the commission's need grant program. Then, resident tuition and fees were \$1,380, according to Oregon state System of Higher Education figures. That means 10 years ago, the commission's need grants could pay up to half of residents' tuition at the University.

"We've lost tremendous ground," Beyer said.


CORRECTION

An article about the Incidental Fee Committee in the Feb. 19 issue of the *Emerald* incorrectly reported IFC member Anne Wagoner motioned MEChA work with the *Student Insurgent* to produce a multicultural newsletter.

As an addition to Wagoner's original motion, IFC member Lydia Lerma suggested the two groups work together.

The *Emerald* regrets the error.

THIS WEEK FEB. 22-28




CULTURAL FORUM
The Cultural Forum presents more fine free programming:

Skylight Cafe Open Mike
Wed. Feb. 24th, 7 p.m.
EMU Skylight
Sign up in Suite 2 on Wed.

A Remembrance
Sat. Feb. 27th, 7:30 p.m.
Ben Linder Room
A performance piece inspired by the 300 years of the witch hunts.

EMU Scheduling Office
High School Speech Tournament
Feb. 25, 26, 27
No EMU or classroom space available during this time.
M109A • 346-6061, 346-6062

Campus Parent COFFEE HOUR



Mondays 9:30-11:00
Family Center, Room 23 EMU 346-0652
Enjoy a cup of coffee & check us out!

main desk store

15% OFF
Cappio
Iced Cappucino's


UPS packages to MDS by 2:00 p.m. M-F
UPS fee + 1.00 per package

Quality Film Processing

US WEST, EWEB & NWNG payment agency. Drop box for check payments in front of Main Desk Store.

Hult Tickets
Look at seating chart while ordering.

REFRESHMENT FOR PARENTS.
*PLEASE COME WITH YOUR CHILDREN.



Sponsored by the Family Center, Room 23 EMU, 346-0652

Children's Art Hours

PUPPET MAKING
FEB. 26
9:45-11:00

YOUR PATRONAGE SUSTAINS US. USE OUR SERVICES. TELL US HOW TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT MEET YOUR NEEDS. YOUR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE.