

Class 'bullies' get treatment

By Sarah Clark
Oregon Daily Emerald

The second-grader was kicking and shoving the other kids again at recess. He bit them and called them names as they tried to play.

Then his attention turned to the kindergarten girl. She was about two-thirds his size, but he picked a fight with her anyway. As the boy held the little girl down and choked her, teachers, counselors and the school principal came running to the rescue.

Hill Walker, a University special education professor, had been watching the boy. He walked over to him and asked why he attacked the girl. The boy looked at him incredulously and replied,



The University is designated a research university by the State System of Higher Education. This is the second story in an ongoing series about University research projects and discoveries.

"Well, it was recess."

Walker has spent the past 27 years studying children like the second-grader — children with anti-social behavior who disrupt class and bully other students.

"I've found aggressive children absolutely fascinating in terms of how they view themselves and the world," said Walker, who is also director of the University's Center on Human Development. "They're like these little Attila the Huns, and they think they're completely normal. They victimize others like crazy, and then they turn around and whine about being rejected and treated badly by their peers."

Through his research, Walker has developed methods for teachers to identify and treat these children before they head down the aggressive behavior path, which Walker said eventually leads to crime.

Because of his work, which includes more than

100 articles and eight books, Walker recently won the 1993 Research Award from the Council for Exceptional Children, an organization that is to special education what the American Medical Association is to medicine.

Walker's research has led to programs that teachers and school counselors can use to teach disruptive children proper social behavior. The programs teach children how to play by the rules at recess and to listen to the teacher in class.

But changing children's behavior takes time and energy, Walker said, and schools are often unwilling to spend extra time on disruptive students.

"The litany you get from school people constantly is, 'I don't have time to do this. This kid should be behaving appropriately on his or her own,'" Walker said. "So what we see is more and more of these kids coming to school, not getting the services that they need, and then disrupting the school, failing school and getting into drugs and crime."

Children who are taught behavior skills have later called Walker to tell him what a tremendous impact his program had on their lives. Teachers have told Walker they've watched aggressive children become normal after his programs.

But not every child has been a success story.

Intervention programs are usually too short to permanently change a child's behavior, Walker said. And solving behavior problems in the classroom doesn't get to the root of the problem — the child's home life.

Volatile tempers stem from problems at home, Walker said, which can include poverty, abuse, divorced parents and drugs.

Walker is currently researching how parents, schools and community service organizations — such as the Children's Services Division — can work together to solve these grass-roots problems.

"We need to change the way we view this behavior pattern," Walker said. "If the child is ever going to change, you've got to meet them halfway at least."

Six students run for EMU board positions

By Beth Hege
Oregon Daily Emerald

Six students have declared their candidacy for EMU Board of Directors, the 15-member body responsible for the development and maintenance of the EMU.

Two students will be elected for one-year seats in the race between S.W. Conser, Keith Rutz and Matt Hasek.

Three candidates are on the ballot for three open seats. Deirdre Johnson, Margaret Chatfield and Stephanie Dixon are candidates for the two-year positions.

Contested-race candidates Conser and Hasek offered their opinions on the role of the EMU board and their aspirations should they be elected. Rutz was unavailable for comment.

The EMU board and the Incidental Fee Committee often find themselves at odds over money and programming, and Hasek, a sophomore in political science, said he is critical of the conflicts he has seen between the two bodies.

"There hasn't been a clear focus on whose needs (elected officials) represent. The IFC needs to recognize its responsibilities to the student body and put personal agendas aside," he said.

Conser, a senior independent studies major, called for a new structure. "Student interests need to be protected. There needs to be a written structure for how the EMU can exert power over individual programs," he said.

Hasek currently serves on the Student Senate. He said his greatest strength is patience.

"I am physically disabled, and I've always had to be patient," he said. "That includes being a good listener and communicator. Many people don't realize what I go through every day."

In his mission statement, Hasek said, "When you vote for Matthew Hasek, you vote for yourself, too."

Conser considers his "absurdity" his greatest strength.

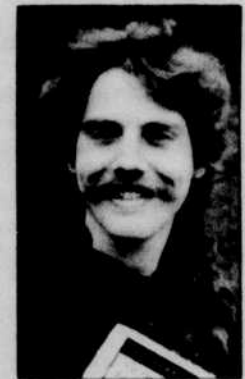
"I'm not afraid of anybody," he said. "This whole corporate structure is absurd, and I am an absurd person. I can work well in it."

Conser said he is familiar with EMU programs because he has worked for the EMU Cultural Forum.

In terms of a mission statement, he said, "I'm anti-bad things." Both Hasek and Conser listed multicultural issues high on their list of priorities.



Matt Hasek



S.W. Conser

Amendment focuses on stalkers

A proposed amendment to the University's Student Conduct Code that would punish stalkers would close the legal loopholes that stalkers have slipped through, several people testified Monday at a public hearing on the amendment.

About 10 people testified in favor of the amendment, which defines stalking as repeatedly contacting another person in a

way that "interferes with their ability to perform the activities of daily life" or makes the person fear for his or her safety.

No one spoke against the amendment. However, ASUO President Bobby Lee said he was concerned that faculty and University employees could not be punished for stalking, because the Student Conduct Code

doesn't apply to them.

Several bills that would outlaw stalking in Oregon are pending in the state Legislature. Peter Swan, legal counsel for the University, said those bills would apply to faculty and University employees.

The amendment will come before the University Senate May 13.

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