

Kingpin



Photo by Randy Thieben

Music student Ben Farrel practices juggling Tuesday on the lawn near the Museum of Art.

Mother Nature provides jobs

By Rebecca Merritt
Oregon Daily Emerald

More than 300 teenagers and their college-age leaders will be learning in a different sort of classroom this summer.

Students in this classroom never have to worry about overcrowding, and it won't cost Oregon taxpayers a cent to keep it open. But that doesn't mean the education received in this unique learning environment — nature — is any less valuable.

For the past 10 years, Northwest Youth Corps has been providing teenagers with the opportunity to learn job skills, work ethics and environmental education by spending the summer working on conservation, reforestation and recreation projects. Program participants and leaders live in tents with their assigned crews at project sites, which are usually miles from civilization.

The program has a positive effect on a large number of youth, said Tom Westrum, NYC program director.

NYC, a private, non-profit organization based in Eugene, develops environmental projects in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service and ranger districts. Westrum said the group completed projects in 16 national forests and 27 different ranger districts throughout the Northwest last year.

The organization offers two five-week summer sessions and one fall session for anyone ages 16 to 19. Participants are usually divided into nine different crews, which are assigned a crew leader and assistant crew leader.

Westrum said the group is currently accepting applications for summer and fall crew leader positions. Those wanting to work for the summer sessions need to submit an application by the first week in May. There is no age limit, and 25 percent of last year's staff were University students, he said.

Crew leaders are paid between \$46 and \$52 a day, including food and camping supplies, and are responsible for supervising projects and working with crew members. Each leader and assistant are in charge of about 11 teenagers, Westrum said.

Crew members work more than 37 hours a week at minimum wage on the various projects. The remainder of the week is spent learning about the environment and acquiring important job skills through educational programs taught by crew leaders. Weekends are spent taking advantage of the recreational opportunities each project area has to offer.

"It's a great way to help out a different section of the population while living outside and getting the biggest physical and mental challenge you've ever had," former crew leader Josh Vinlove said.

Vinlove said NYC is unique because it is a residential youth corps. Participants come from rural communities in Oregon and Washington and from larger cities.

Vinlove, who has been involved with the program for the past three years, both as a member and a leader, said participants learn important lessons in self-confidence and independence. Expectations of the program are high, and crew members rely on the motivation provided by leaders.

Westrum said NYC projects lined up for this summer include building two miles of trail at Alpine Lakes Wilderness near Wenatchee, Wash. Crew members will prune and thin trees on the Santiam Pass and reconstruct part of the old Cascade Trail outside of Sweet Home. The group will also build two 40-foot bridges in the Ochoco National Forest.

Those interested in becoming a crew leader may stop by the NYC office at 5120 Franklin Blvd. or call Westrum at 746-6853 for more information.

Author: West could have saved Jews

By Shanti Sosienski
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The deaths of millions of Jews were the fault of bureaucratic delays of many Western nations, said a visiting professor during her lecture Tuesday night.

"People did not understand that stopping the Nazis was a political move, not just a military one; we can see that now," said Dali Offer.

Offer has dedicated her life to researching the details of rescues of European Jews. Her

most recent book, *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel 1939-44*, won the 1992 Jewish book award.

"Auschwitz was in operation for two years as a death camp, and no one knew?" she said to make a point about the level of ignorance she believed was displayed by the Western nations.

"Millions of Jews were deported from European countries to Germany, and no one questioned their destination," she said. "For the most part,

people in the Western nations did not know what was going on in Germany. The government did."

Offer cited cases of Jews who escaped the death camps.

"They sent coded telegrams through Germany to Switzerland. No one responded," she said. "People didn't believe it then, and some still don't believe it now."

Offer said the only way to stop the misconceptions people have today about the Holocaust is through education.

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