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 **UO Student Health Center Health Education Program**

**COMMUNITY**

**Helmet law still unpopular**

By Alaina Baum  
For The Oregon Daily Emerald

What is the No. 1 reason for not wearing a bicycle helmet? "Vanity!" said Lincoln Shirley, an employee of Paul's Bicycle Shop.

"It's a hassle. I hate helmets, but I know I should wear one," said Bart Beattie, a junior at the University.

"They're kind of expensive," said Dayne Hironaka, a freshman.

Whether it's a concern for neatly styled locks, a gently pressed outfit, dwindling cash flow or obsession with convenience: the fact is that most people just aren't wearing bicycle helmets even though they know they should.

Next July a mandatory bicycle helmet law for children 16 and younger will go into effect. For adults, helmets are still an option.

"I'm a big fan of educating people to want to wear helmets," Shirley said, "but I think those laws are dumb. I don't want anybody telling me I've got to wear a helmet."

Even Diane Bishop, the bicycle and alternative modes coordinator for Eugene, said she did not initially support the helmet law for children.

"It's not that I don't believe in helmets," Bishop said. "I'm still not sure that forcing ... or telling people they have to is the way to go."

Unless a compulsory helmet law is passed for adult bicycle riders, the many helmet-less bicycle riders that traverse the city and campus streets will have to be convinced to wear one.

Although she believes bicycle safety education is a key part of the answer, "how to get to adults — I've never figured that one out," Bishop said with a laugh.

Bishop said that after explaining to adults the obvious benefits of wearing one, "it seems logical that they would take the next step. But somehow human nature doesn't quite follow those lines."

"I've been thinking about wearing my helmet — that's why it's near me now ... it's progressing closer and closer to my head," said Beattie, whose helmet stayed prominently tethered to the outside of his backpack as he rode

past the EMU.

Bishop said 85 bicycle accidents were reported to her in 1992, and last summer, an accident in the evening between two bikers without helmets or lights resulted in a fatality. Yet she is reluctant to use negative news reports to persuade adults.

"But I don't know how to make a helmet message positive," said Bishop adding that even a humorous slogan like "Wear a helmet so you don't become a vegetable" is still too negative.

"It's very seldom that I see an accident report that doesn't involve an injury," said Bishop, and although sometimes it's just a few scrapes or bruises, "when we fall ... we follow our heads ... we're going to land on them."

To the casual rider that doesn't think it's worthwhile to invest in a helmet, Bishop reminds them that the cost of a helmet would certainly outweigh the cost of an emergency room visit.

"Cost is just another excuse," Shirley said. "It's a small price to pay for your head."

**COMMUNITY UPDATE**

• The Springfield Public Library is sponsoring an essay contest for anyone six years or older.

Essays must focus on the impact of libraries to people's lives. Entries must be mailed or brought to the library, 225 5th St., by Dec. 31. A \$100 prize will be awarded to winners in three different age divisions. For more information, call Judy Harold at 726-3766.

• The Lane County Board of Commissioners is accepting applications from low-income residents for its Housing Policy Board.

The Housing Policy Board acts as a forum for public input into community issues of homelessness and affordable housing. The board reviews low-income housing needs and makes policy and recommendations to Lane County governments. Applications are available at the Board of Commissioner's office, 125 E. 8th Ave. Deadline is Nov. 30 at 5 p.m. For more information, call 687-3755.

• A Nordic Ski Faire is scheduled for Tuesday at the Eugene Hult Center.



Visitors can see the latest in cross country ski equipment, clothing and information about local ski areas at the fair sponsored by the city of Eugene. Area ski merchants, clubs and resorts will be at the fair with exhibits and equipment displays. Registration for winter ski lessons and trips will also be accepted at the fair.

The fair begins at 7 p.m. and runs until 9 p.m. For more information, call the River House Outdoor Program, 687-5329.

• Womenspace invites women of all ages to attend a free discussion titled "The Avenues of Empowerment Through the Birthing Process" Thursday.

The meeting is scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Junction City Medical Clinic. Mary Derlacki, a family nurse practitioner, and Clarabeth Kassel, a certified midwife will be at the meeting.

• The Sheldon Pool has announced a new family swim scheduled for Saturdays from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1.75 for children 17 and under and \$5 for families.

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