

CRIME

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ject by University architecture students, was originally intended for use by the community. Students played basketball in the park, and Sacred Heart General Hospital staff ate lunches there.

"Progressively, the park has attracted more people," Officer Kenneth Saxon III, a community police officer who has been working the west university beat for over three years, said during the meeting.

The number of non-residents using the park has greatly increased, driving away community members. Saxon said people rarely eat lunches, study or play basketball in the park anymore.

Spring and summer were the worst times, Saxon said. "During spring, I noticed dogs using the faucets and people using the sinks to wash their clothes, along with illegal fires," Saxon said. "Also I noticed a lot of intoxication, a lot of illegal drug transactions and also a number of assaults."

During the summer months, Saxon said cultural events in Eugene brings people from other parts of the country who camp out in the park. They filter out to the East 13th Avenue area looking for food, he said, and get into numerous fights.

"One night in particular, we had 10 police officers dealing with problems in that area," he said.

Saxon said there were more than 90 citations and arrests

issued last July and August in or near the park. He said the street population damaged facilities in the park and intimidated the community.

"I started to get complaints and calls from neighbors," Saxon said. "There were people trespassing on their property, using their garden hoses as showers. There were people defecating on their property."

"This summer it was just awful," said Vikki Walker, a University theater arts student who lives at 14th Avenue and Patterson Street. "There were people playing bongos till really late at night. One night at 2 a.m., somebody was banging on my door trying to get into my apartment."

"What I'm concerned about is I don't feel safe with my wife and child in the neighborhood," said Bob Steringer, a West University Neighbors board member.

Richard Green, the owner of Rainbow Optics on East 13th Avenue and a board member of the University Small Business Association, said, "I had an incident at work where somebody came through the back door and stole one of my employees' purses. We later found the purse among some bushes in the park."

Saxon, who initiated Thursday's meeting, said one of the problems with law enforcement was the visibility of the park from the streets.

"I was asking for suggestions for what we, the community, could do to address the situation," he said. "One thing I noticed was the visibility of the park. You have to look quite a bit to see what's going on. Talking to differ-

ent people in the community, it was suggested that maybe we could make visibility better."

Green agreed. "I think it's imperative that the bushes, the shelters and the lattice work be removed, to improve visibility," he said. "We feel strongly about that park because of the illegal activity."

Residents also agreed at the meeting that removing shelters will solve the problem of people camping in the park. The city will act on residents' wishes, Morgan said.

"April 1 would be the soonest we can get the shrubbery out," he said. He said the picnic shelters and lattice work also will be removed. The shelters will be salvaged for other parks that need them.

Morgan said the park is a problem from the maintenance point of view as well.

"That park is only 0.37 acres," he said. "The time we have to put into that park per acre has been more than any other park because of the problems, such as litter. There were times this summer when we were sending a person over daily."

Shannon McCarthy, chairwoman of West University Neighbors, said, "We will make these changes and see in a year's time what the situation is. If we feel that we have to make more changes, we will."

West University Neighbors was formed in the mid-1970s for the community to take an active role in improving the neighborhood, which extends from 19th Avenue to the Eugene Millrace and High Street to Alder Street.

Beer festival



NORMAN MESMAN for the Emerald
Kimberly Kittredge observes the rapidly circulating hops reacting to yeast in a homestyle beer fermenter at the Beer Festival at the fairgrounds Saturday evening.

OBSERVANCE

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American Catholic and Protestant ones can be difficult without legal days off.

"They make it basically impossible for you to practice your faith," she said. "It sends a message that we're not a priority."

During fall term, the JSU asked the University to consider using a consent form that would give students a guaranteed right to observe their own holidays.

The consent form would allow a student to reschedule his or her final or be absent during the first week of classes without being dropped.

Currently, students who wish to observe a non-traditional holiday must take up the matter with their professors. Kinberg said she wants the consent forms to provide a guarantee.

Kinberg said the JSU has tried in vain for the past few years to get the administration's attention on the issue.

"Every year we have protested and they haven't responded," Kinberg said. "It's really hard to get through the bureaucracy."

This year was the first year the JSU brought its problem to Marlene Drescher,

director of the Office of Student Advocacy. Drescher has since referred the matter to Dave Hubin of the president's office.

Hubin, acting executive assistant to the president, said the president's office has tried to make it easier for students to observe Rosh Hashana during the past few years.

But now with the JSU's new request, Hubin said he believes there is a chance a system could be worked out that is more "uniform" and "equitable."

Hubin said the president agrees with the intent of the consent form idea, but there are many issues that need to be addressed first.

"There's a lot of work before we have it ready to implement," Hubin said. "Certainly by fall term I would expect something to be in place along (the consent form) lines."

One problem with the consent form is that anyone could claim that they are Jewish and ask for their exam schedule to be changed, Kinberg said.

However, she said the University might have contacts from the community who could inform the University of which days should be taken off.

Jewish students are not the only ones

'They make it basically impossible for you to practice your faith. It sends a message that we're not a priority.'

— Yohanna Kinberg,
Jewish Student Union co-director

who must deal with the problem of taking off their own holidays.

Hanan Ramahi, a member of the Muslim Student Association, said she also struggles with the decision of going to class on a holiday or not.

"It's very important you go to class, but you feel it is out of the ignorance of other people that you go," she said.

Ramahi said she believes one problem administrators have with accommodating non-traditional holidays like hers is that they follow the lunar calendar, which makes the holidays fall on a different day every year.

Although the MSA has not asked the administration to guarantee its members holidays, it supports the JSU's efforts, said Mohammed Sami, deputy director of MSA.

CRISIS

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help for drug-related problems, and the majority of callers — 40 percent — suffer from loneliness, Balsam said.

As another sign of changing times, Skip said a lot of people call the center because they can't find work in the poor job market.

"The job market is so bad that people leaving school now are really freaking out," he said. "We've had a lot of calls, espe-

cially from older students in the '30s and '40s who started over and are realizing now that at their age it's going to be really hard.

"If you would have had four years of college back in the early 1970s, you would have had a good job. That's just not true anymore, and older people are finding that out."

More and more people are using the Crisis Center's services. The number of calls received from July 1993 to January 1994 has increased by 33 percent over

the same period last year, Balsam said.

Although the Crisis Center is ready and willing to help, sometimes a caller's problem is beyond the scope of the staff. When that happens, the Crisis Center will refer the caller to other resources in town.

But sometimes staffers can't help a caller simply because the resources aren't there to refer a caller to, such as the lack of emergency housing for people who need immediate help. "Some of

the hardest calls I get are from people who genuinely need a service that isn't out there," Skip said. "It's frustrating when you feel like you want to do something for somebody and you can't. You feel helpless."

Counseling real clients rather than role-playing a counselor in classes is beneficial for students who are considering a career in counseling. A lot of students volunteer at the clinic to "see if they can handle it," said Balsam.

"That's one of the most reward-

ing things about this — actually being able to help people," she said. "Other people say, 'Oh, that must be so stressful. How could you handle hearing all those people's problems?' But the thing is, people have problems. It's a fact of life. You can either stick your head in the sand and ignore it, or try to do something about it."

"It feels really good to be part of a solution, even if it's just a small part."

To reach the Crisis Center hotline, call 346-4488.

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