

Cultural ROOTS

People will have the opportunity to explore various Asian cultures at the Asian Celebration

By Isa Lester
Freelance Reporter

"The food alone is enough to draw anyone," claims Ken Nagao, co-chairman of Asian Celebration. Of course, there are more compelling reasons to take a free bus ride to the Lane County Fairgrounds this weekend. Besides a tantalizing food court and cooking demonstrations, the 11th Annual Asian Celebration will feature an exciting entertainment line up, unique crafts exhibits, martial arts demonstrations and numerous dance performances.

With more than a dozen Asian cultures represented by various media and demonstrations, the Celebration is certain to entertain, intrigue, and inspire all who attend.

In 1984, the founders of the Asian Celebration were looking for a way to sponsor cultural events in the community. Since their humble start as a group of seven community members, they have done more than present Asian events to the city; they have been responsible for exposing the entire community to the previously ignored heritage of many cultures.

For example, Eugene Taiko, a group of local musicians who perform a mix of traditional and modern Japanese music on homemade drums, formed specifically for the Asian Celebration a few years ago. Now, the group performs for several events, including the Japanese Folk Festival in July.

The Asian Kite Festival, usually held as a precursor to Eugene Celebration in September, is another example of the kind of events that highlight Asian influ-



EN-MIN CHANG/Emerald

ences in the community.

Nagao is proud of the fact that through groups like Eugene Taiko, many second- and third-generation Asian-Americans can discover and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of their ancestors. He hopes that entertaining and informative events such as Asian Celebration will encourage young people of all ethnic backgrounds to explore their cultural roots.

One of the long-range goals of the Asian-American Foundation, which sponsors the Celebration, is to eventually build a community center for the exhibition, exploration, and facilitation of all ethnic cultures. As part of their fund-raising efforts for this project, the foundation will host a silent auction at the Celebration.

As co-director of the Asian Pacific American Student Union (APASU) on campus, Jan Harada hopes that all who attend the Celebration might learn a little more about the uniqueness of the various Asian cultures.

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Volunteers for the Asian Celebration rehearse in preparation for their performance this weekend.

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Students rally to rescue beer gardens

Outrage over the possible discontinuation of the weekly beer gardens in the Erb Memorial Union has given strength to a movement to keep the campus tradition running. University student John Robb, who was hired at the beginning of this winter term to manage the event, is leading the effort.

"Three years ago there were huge crowds at the beer garden," Robb said. At that time, the beer gardens entertainment was being booked by the Cultural Forum's regional music director.

Because the crowds diminished under the Forum's direction last year, the EMU Food Service assumed entertainment duties. This led to the hiring of Robb.

Robb acknowledges there have been problems with recent management of the beer gardens.

"They were lacking advertising, they had the heaters turned off, there was no decor," Robb said. "It

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for example."

The beer gardens are now sponsored by Track Town Pizza, Taylor's, China Blue Restaurant, Dominos Pizza and Face The Music.

Among the changes implemented to increase the appeal of the beer gardens is the booking of more popular bands such as Higher Ground, Rubberneck and Freidrick's Teeth. Students also have the choice of Henry's, Black Butte Porter and Full Sail beers on tap. Non-alcoholic beverages are served as well.

The advantages of the beer garden include its central location on cam-

pus and student access to services like Project Safe Ride and the EMU Recreational Center. The loss of the beer garden would be a needless sacrifice because of poor management on the part of a few individuals and the continued interest in having the beer gardens on campus.

Robb said his staff at the beer gardens is dedicated to saving the event, even though the budget of the EMU Food Service has not allocated funds to the beer garden for next year.

"If the beer gardens are making money, we can save it. It's inexpensive, fun and promotes campus unity," Robb said.

Students should help keep a 23-year-old tradition alive at the University and attend the revamped beer gardens.

If the EMU administrators allow the beer gardens to end, the local bar owners will have the last laugh by taking student entertainment dollars off campus.



Land of the Blind to play at WOW

Land of the Blind, a Portland band, will play at 8:30 p.m. Feb. 22 at WOW Hall.

Their music blends tribal, ethnic and new world sounds into a unique style dubbed as "ecto-ethno-trance-dance" music. They use a variety of instruments, including ethnic percussion and violin, but no guitars.

Land of the Blind will share the stage with Doris Daze, another Portland band.

Admission is \$5 at the door. Doors open at 8 p.m., and all ages are welcome. Adult refreshments will be served downstairs.