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TODAY

Initial registration for 1996 summer classes begins.



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WEATHER
Morning clouds, fog.
High 65. Low 40.

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Pride Week celebrates community

■ **CELEBRATION:** The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance plans for a supportive atmosphere

By Kristin Bailey
Student Activities Reporter

For Cassie Salewske, this week is symbolic of her biggest personal triumph.

"I came out of the closet last year during Pride Week," she said. "My life has done a complete 180 in the past year."

This week marks the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Alliance's Pride Week — a celebration of what the group stands for and the pride of its members.

"Pride Week is important because it promotes visibility and fosters a strong sense of community," Salewske, Pride Week coordinator, said. "It gives people the opportunity to be together and feel safe."

During last year's Queerfest, a mix of music and dance in the EMU Courtyard, Salewske said she publicly acknowledged her homosexuality for the first time.

"It was when I went public and felt most comfortable," she said. "I put a Pride Week rainbow pin on my backpack that day, and I've never taken it off. That was the best day of my life. I didn't want to leave."

Pride Week preparations began in January. Activities will include panel discussions, performances, humor, wit and great charm, LGBA Co-Director Margaret Butler said.

"I've never really experienced Pride Week before, so I'm looking forward to this," she said. "I'm hoping to learn from some of the workshops, and I'm hop-

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RU 486

■ **ABORTION:** The Food and Drug Administration will consider the pill for approval by 1997

By Tamyra Howser
Freelance Reporter

The French abortion pill RU 486 has reached American shores after 10 years of controversy and delay. Widely used throughout Europe and China, the United States may be the next country to legalize these pills.

After extensive clinical trials throughout the country, RU 486 will be considered for Food and Drug Administration approval by 1997. Developed by French manufacturer Roussel Uclaf, RU 486 was legalized in France in 1988. Great Britain, Germany, Sweden and China followed suit.

Marilyn Helton, patient services director for Planned Parenthood of Eugene, believes it to be a safe and effective process.

"It's a wonderful alternative to surgical abortion," she said. "Women feel a greater control over the procedure. It's not something being done to them. They take the medicines; they see the process happening."

If the FDA does legalize RU 486, Planned Parenthood of Eugene will not distribute the drug, Helton said.

"At this point, [the southwest] clinics in

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WHAT IS RU 486?

■ RU 486 originated in France and was legalized for public use in 1988. One out of three French women choose abortion pills over surgical abortion. The United States adopted the French RU 486 procedure during its clinical trials. President Clinton lifted the import alert of RU 486 in January 1993, and research on the drug has resumed.

OTHER POSSIBLE TREATMENT USES FOR RU 486:

- Breast cancer
- Meningioma (inoperable brain tumors)
- Endometriosis
- Infertility
- Cushing's Syndrome: (RU 486 may also lessen Cushing's symptoms of diabetes, osteoporosis, severe muscular weakness and mental depression.)
- Caesarean Sections

An estimated 200,000 young women die each year because of unsafe and illegal abortions.

Source: RU 486 and Women in Developing Nations Feminist Majority Foundation Report

Graphics & Illustration by DENNIS BOLT. Photos by MATHEW STIFFLER/Emerald

Ground-breaking blesses Northwest's first women-built home

■ **HOUSING:** Women's Project and Habitat for Humanity are organizing construction

By Dawn Paugh
Community Reporter

Eight shovels, a hammer and a paint brush laid in a circle, upon the uneven lumps of grass, weeds and dirt that will be the plot of land in the Bethel-Danebo area where Gail Johnson and her three children — ages eight, 14 and 17 — will build their own house.

"This has been a lifelong dream of mine," Johnson said. "This is a place where we can be called a family."

Johnson's home will be the first women-built home in the Northwest, with the help of the Women's Project, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit organization that helps people obtain decent housing, said Kay Brandt, a member of the Women's Project publicity committee.

At the ground-breaking ceremony Saturday, about 75

people gathered to bless the ground and the female professionals and volunteers who will be donating their time to build Johnson's home.

"Ground-breaking is done every time a house will be built," said Martha Schneider, a member of Women's Project. "It's the Indian way of blessing the project to give it a spiritual uplift."

From design to finish work, Johnson's house will be completed by about 150 women.

"Women often don't get the opportunity to do this type of work," Brandt said. "That is the empowering thing about this group of women, it's about supporting women to learn more skills and empower women to believe they can do it."

Only 45 completely women-built Habitat for Humanity homes have been built in the United States.

"Land and lots are very hard to come by," said Jean Tate, with the Women's Project. "What we need is land, land, land."

About 2,500 people are on the Lane County waiting list for a Habitat home. The Johnsons were on a list for 2 1/2 years. She qualified to be on the list because she was below the standard of living, yet she has the income to pay for a non-interest loan.

Women began meeting in December to start planning the project. It began with a small group of women who filled out Habitat for Humanity volunteer forms, and were contacted about working on a separate women's project, Brandt said.

Passing on the news of a women-built home caused the growth in interest, she said.

"Meetings got bigger every time we met," Brandt said.

Habitat homes are sold to families at no profit and are financed with affordable, no-interest loans. The homeowner's monthly mortgage payments go into a revolving Fund of Humanity that is used to build more houses.

Families help with the building of their own home and

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