MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1996

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TODAY

Today is the last issue of the Emerald for spring term. Summer publication will begin June 25.

INSIDE

WEATHER

Partly sunny. High 70. Low 45.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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Officials identify student killed in fire

■ **FATALITY:** Gregory Scott Rivers was described as an "honest, sincere and kind person"

By Brian Womack
Community Reporter

The 21-year-old University student who died in a fire Thursday has been identified as Gregory Scott Rivers. The cause of the fire has been preliminarily attributed to an electrical short, said Jan Power, Eugene public safety spokeswoman.

The fire started in the bedroom, a converted carport, where Rivers was sleeping. Most likely it was caused by a damaged electrical extension cord, Power said. Investigators said they have generally ruled out arson and plan to determine the cause of Rivers' death next week. They are still waiting for the autopsy reports from the medical examiner's office.

The fire, at 1677 Pearl St., caused between $75,000 and $100,000 in damage. Rivers' three roommates and a visitor escaped unharmed.

Rivers, who was a junior at the University, was from Bend. A memorial service will be held in his hometown this evening, said Louis Chatoff, Rivers' brother-in-law.

Chatoff said the news of his death shocked Rivers' family and friends.

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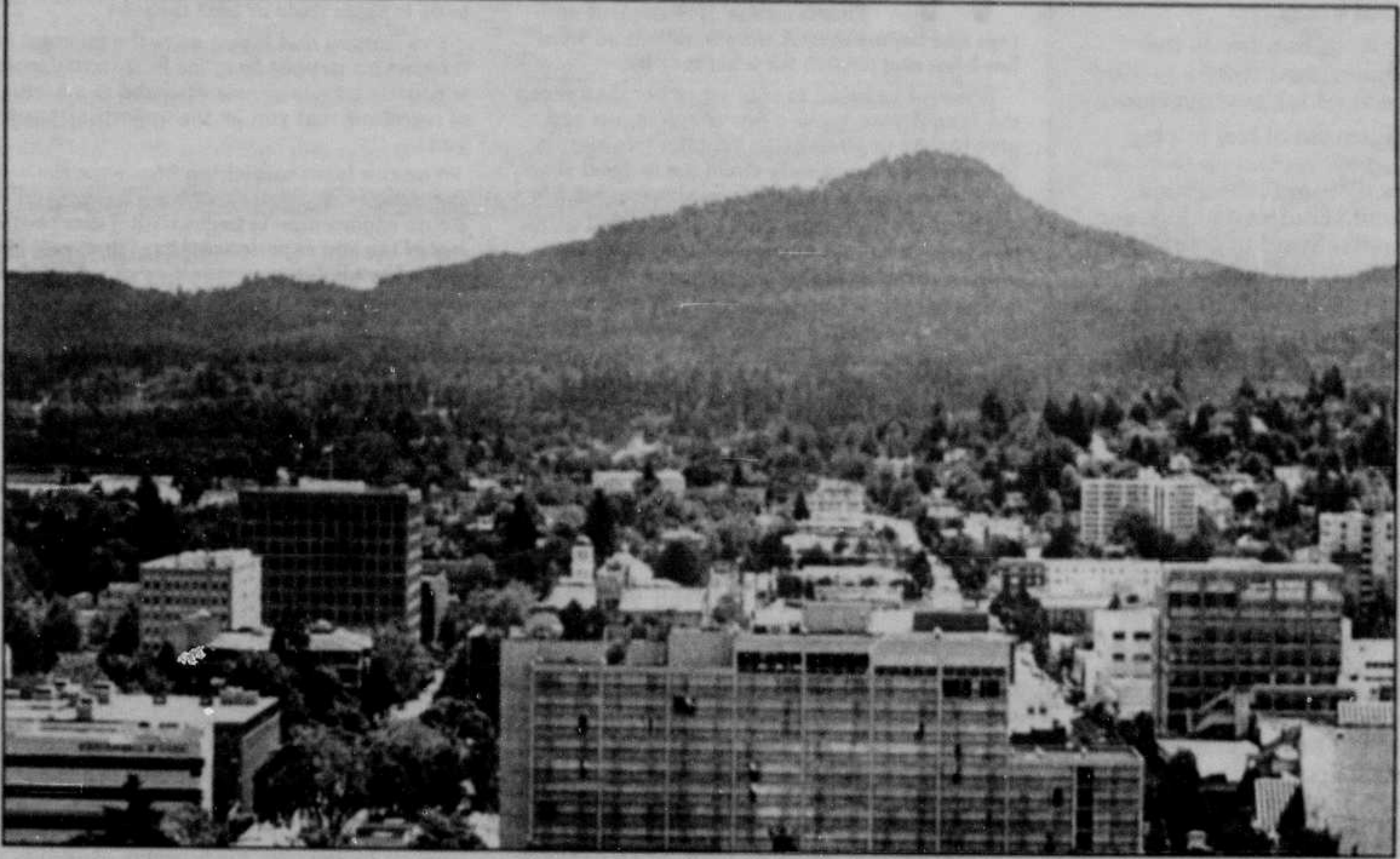
From one Butte to another



MATHEW STIFFLER/Emerald

Classes are almost over, and summer is not far behind, many of us will have to say goodbye to Eugene. This view from the top of Skinners Butte can provide us with one last look at the Emerald City before going home for the summer or graduating.

Rising tuition costs outweigh most summer job wages

■ **MONEY:** Most college students work year-round yet still graduate with student loan debts

By Jean M. Bond
Higher Education Reporter

Today's students may be surprised to hear this, but a summer job used to pay for a college education, said Jay Remy, Oregon Student Lobby communications director.

In 1970, Oregon state college tuition cost $408 a year for resident undergraduates, he said. Students earning the minimum wage of $1.25 an hour could earn around $600 at a full-time summer job.

This summer, students who work full time at Oregon's $4.75 an hour minimum wage can expect to gross around $2,280, Remy said. Tuition and fees for Oregon state colleges will be around $3,500. And that figure doesn't even include living expenses or books, he said.

"We've heard a lot of talk from legislators and others who seem to think students just don't work as hard as they did 25 years ago," Remy said. "But the reality is the cost of tuition in state system schools has risen much faster than wages."

Remy said the situation may be even worse for many students. "We looked at the best case scenario: a tax-exempt student getting a full-time job for 12 weeks and having no living expenses during the summer," he said. Students who don't get a full-time job or who have to pay for their own living expenses have that much less to help to pay for their education.

One way students are making ends meet is by working during the school year in addition to their summer jobs, he said. Almost 64 percent of Oregon students work during the academic year. Of that percentage, about 30 percent work 10 to 20 hours per week, and about 30 percent work more than 20 hours per week.

Damiana Merryweather, a junior history major, said she works around 10 hours a week in a work study position and

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DOES WORK PAY?
Summer work earnings compared to resident OSSHE average tuition and fees:

SOURCE: Oregon Student Lobby

DENNIS BOLT/Emerald

New union contract in works

■ **OPEU:** The latest agreement would include a salary increase and medical insurance

By Laura Kepshire
Higher Education Reporter

The Oregon Public Employees Union ratified its part of a tentative contract with the Oregon State System of Higher Education last Friday.

The new contract could give OPEU employees a salary increase, early retirement and medical insurance, said Jeff Seekatz, chair of the bargaining team for OPEU.

OPEU and OSSHE decided on the tentative contract May 3. Late last month, ballots were given to OPEU members to ratify the agreement. Eighty-seven percent of its members voted yes and 13 percent voted no, Seekatz said.

The contract will go into effect July 1 and run through June 30, 1999 if OSSHE ratifies their end of the contract. They are expected to do so by the end of this week, Seekatz said.

OPEU represents more than 3,300 OSSHE employees and has been negotiating with OSSHE since it became its new employer last August, Seekatz said.

Seekatz said the new contract is a step in the right direction for OPEU and has given its employees better benefits than they had with the Department of Administration Services in Salem.

Specific details involving the contract will not be released until after OSSHE has ratified their end of the bargain.

It contains settlements on improved language, a salary increase, early retirement, medical insurance and length of time for the contract, Seekatz said.

OPEU is planning to begin a wage reopener with OSSHE this coming December to begin bargaining for higher wages and better insurance coverage that would go into effect earlier in 1997.

If OPEU does not negotiate these benefits now, employees will have to wait until after 1999 to see a wage increase, Seekatz said.

"The rest cannot be decided on until after the contract runs out in 1999," Seekatz said.