

Toys for Tots asks for more donations

Donated toys will be given to needy kids in the Eugene area who may not get other gifts

By Scott Pesznecker
Freelance Reporter

Fifty years ago, the wife of the founder of Toys for Tots gave the program's first donation to a needy child in the form of a hand-crafted rag doll.

Toys for Tots is a national program today that helps to supply needy children with gifts for the holiday season. The 32nd consecutive collection of donated gifts in Lane County began on Monday.

Mike Moskovitz, publicity chairman of Toys for Tots, said several local parents depend on events such as Toys for Tots because they do not have the money to buy presents for their children.

"We look at the program as a self-esteem builder for kids," he said. "It's about more than just giving kids toys. It's about the feeling that they receive. For some kids, the toy that they get from us will be the only toy that they get this Christmas."

The program is sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves. Marines, local firemen and community volunteers are coordinating the non-profit program.

Established shortly after World War II, Toys for Tots has been traditionally managed by the Marines. Moskovitz said the Lane County Toys for Tots program is different from the programs in other cities because community members, not just Marines, are involved.

"Around 15 years ago Marine involvement dwindled and community people got involved," Moskovitz said. "Lo-

cal firefighters took the project in under their wing. Since then the Marines have come back into the program."

People who would like to donate a gift are being asked to give new toys or cash donations, which will go toward buying more toys.

"We ask for new toys because a lot of the time used toys are broken and there is nobody to fix them," Moskovitz said. "Kids, whether they are poor or not, would like to have a new toy that's not beat up."

Recommended gifts include whatever is heavily advertised on television. Highly anticipated donations for this year include "Star Wars" and "Anastasia" action figures.

Last year Toys for Tots provided over 4,000 children with one or two new toys. According to Moskovitz, help comes from all over the community.

"In the past few years, fraternities and sororities have done community service by gathering up toys to give to Toys for Tots," he said.

Although the date will not be established until closer toward Christmas, distribution of the toys will take place at Patterson Elementary School. Because the toys will be separated into categories for distribution, program coordinators are asking donors not to wrap their donations.

Writing a check is an acceptable alternative to cash donations, Moskovitz said. Checks can be mailed to Toys for Tots, care of Pacific Cascade Federal Credit Union, 1155 Chambers St., Eugene, OR 97402.

For more information about the Toys for Tots program and a list of collection sites, call 465-0503.

Student demand brings back UO English minor

The English minor was dismantled two years ago because of limited spaces in classes

By Nicole Kristal
Higher Education Reporter

Need a minor?

Chances are you've already completed eight of the 24 credits required for the English minor, according to English peer advisor Kirsten Leishman.

"I think there are a lot of people who are one-fourth of the way done with the English minor and don't even know it," Leishman said.

Leishman said the minor was dismantled two years ago because English majors found themselves competing with too many minors for required courses.

"Now that there are some openings in the major, the minor has been reinstated," Leishman said.

She said recently the department has been losing majors to other departments such as women's studies and environmental studies.

Associate English Professor James Boren said there has been

continued student demand for the minor since then. He said when the department added faculty members, it had the means to reinstate the minor.

Boren said the minor will benefit students.

"It will give on their diplomas substantiation of the work they've done in literature," he said. "I'm very positive about it."

He also said the English department is very open because it offers a variety of courses in film, folklore and literature. For this reason, the department attracts students from many different disciplines.

Leishman said the reinstatement will benefit students who enjoyed their English classes in high school, but do not necessarily want to major in the subject.

As far as the requirements for an English minor, she said not all English courses count toward the major and that all requirements must be taken with a graded option.

More specifics about the requirements can be obtained from Peer Advising and the English department.

OSPIRG reports on 'trouble toys'

Some toys that seem harmless may actually pose a choking hazard for young children

By Adam Rice
Freelance Reporter

OSPIRG released its 12th annual "Trouble in Toyland" report at PeaceHealth Medical Center Tuesday morning in order to do its part in saving children from unnecessary injury.

This report exposes hazardous toys that could pose a threat to young children, particularly during the holiday season, and focuses on the danger of choking faced by children 3 years of age and under. Toys with small, choking parts and play value — meaning they have bright colors and cartoon features and easily attract young children — have been banned since 1994.

"Parents need to be aware that children are still at risk from toys found on store shelves," OSPIRG spokeswoman Carolyn Whipple said. "Every year, children needlessly choke to death on toys, often given to them by unsuspecting relatives."

This year's report lists 12 toys that are considered dangerous by Consumer Product Safety Commission standards. Highlighted in

Dangerous toys

The following are some of the toys that OSPIRG deems dangerous for young children 3 years and under:

PRODUCT (#)	MANUFACTURER	HAZARD
101 Dalmations (69805)	Mattel	Small parts, choking hazard
Arthur toys (5841/5835, 5844/5835)	Playskool	Small parts, choking hazard
Bolt N Nut (2681)	Fun N Learn	Small parts, choking hazard
Madeline Doll (not listed)	Eden	Small parts, choking hazard
Baby's birthday balloons (various)	various	Choking hazard
Frog Erasers (not listed)	Sanrio	Small parts, choking hazard
Free-Floating Eyeball Ball (not listed)	unknown	Small ball, choking hazard
String Along Beads (2035)	Eddu	Small beads, choking hazard
Pounding Drum (9303)	Plan Toys	Small balls, choking hazard
Tub Squirts (403)	Gerry	Small balls, choking hazard
Stomp Rocket (not listed)	D&L Company	Projectile

CARA STRAZZO/Emerald

this year's report is the plastic figure "Arthur's Mom," a character from a popular Nickelodeon television show viewed by children under 3 years. The toy contains a small part that poses a choking hazard.

Balloons pose another hazard to children, but they are not regulated by the CPSC. Forty-two children have choked to death on balloons since 1990. OSPIRG also has criticized retailers for marketing balloons targeted at very young children, such as balloons that read "Baby's 1st Birthday."

"Balloons are the leading cause of choking deaths," said OSPIRG

spokesman Jerome Grzybowski.

OSPIRG, however, is fighting against more than choking fatalities. The Stomp Rocket has come under fire by the researchers as a potential eye hazard. The Stomp Rocket is a plastic projectile missile that boasts flying over 300 feet into the air at speeds exceeding 100 mph.

"There are so many toys appropriate for the under-three age group," said Dr. Thomas Roe, a pediatrician at PeaceHealth Medical Center. "We don't need to manufacture toys that send children to the hospital during the holiday season."

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