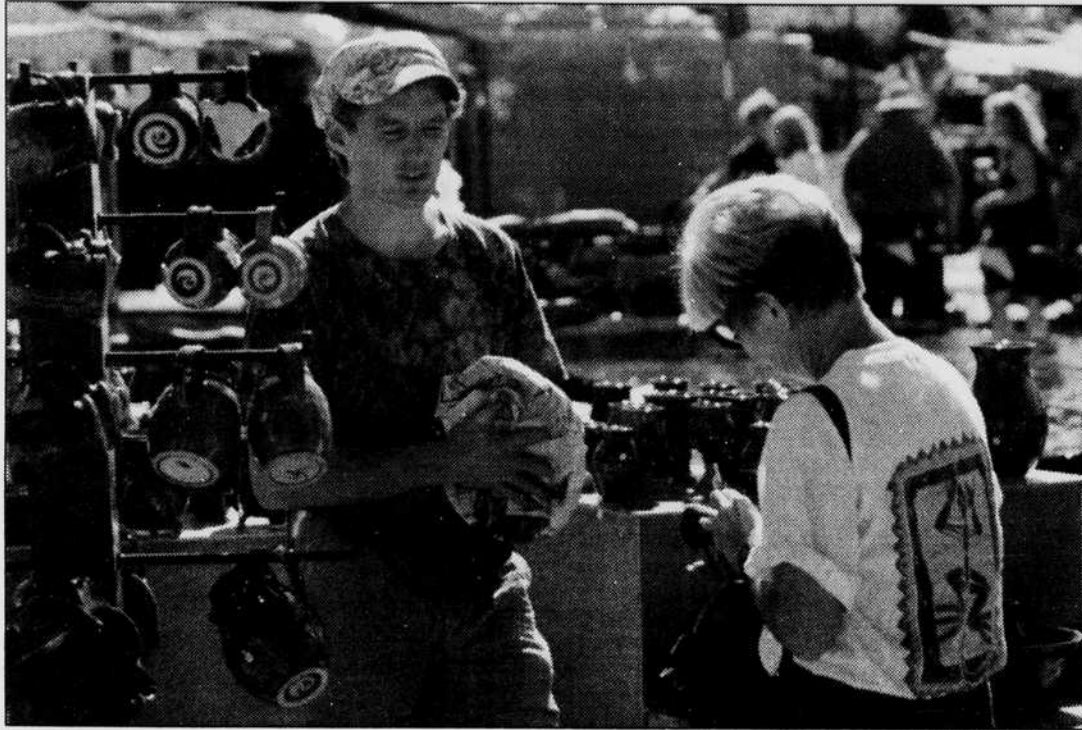


# Saturday Market celebrates Eugene's downtown area



Steve Albrechtsen wraps a ceramic bowl for Maureen Frahm of San Diego at the Saturday Market.

*Local artisans have been selling wares at the Market for almost three decades*

**By Peter Breaden**  
*Oregon Daily Emerald*

From the April planting season until Thanksgiving's harvest time, a goblin in its 29th year rises in the heart of Eugene. The Saturday Market is often branded the "last bastion of the terminally hip," a link to the thirty-something expression of communal life and flower power.

Described as a clan by some, the market occupies the park blocks at 8th Avenue and Oak Street, across from Eugene City Hall. The mission of the market is to provide "a low-cost marketplace for local handcrafters and artisans and a weekly celebration for the Eugene community." Along with the hand-crafted wares are 24 food booths and a stage that holds a variety of musical performances.

The same stage hosted the Market's first wedding when Eileen Polk and Anthony Cormier were married last July. The Market will

hold a clearance sale on October 10. "It doesn't matter if it rains, if it's sunny, or if it's an election year," said Kim Still, assistant manager of the Market. "It's pretty much just a festive atmosphere every week."

The Saturday Market was founded by Lotte Streisinger, who borrowed the idea from Central American market plazas and her own childhood memories.

"The Eugene community was losing its downtown to Valley River Center and to the suburbs," said Streisinger, who is a professional potter from Munich, Germany. "The Market is a centralizing force."

The original 29 vendors have grown into a body of over 800 active members. It is governed by a nine-member board of directors, which is composed of artisans and community members.

"It's a good way to participate in the economy of Eugene, to make it stronger, with no middle-men," Still said. "It's not that common."

The Saturday Market Standards Committee enforces criteria related to "uniqueness, originality, and craft processes." Vendors pay \$8 and 10 percent of sales for their booth space, which is eight feet deep by eight feet wide. At the first gathering on May 9, 1970, the fee was \$1.

"In the beginning, many people thought of it as a political statement, opposing the military and industrial complex," she said. "Now it's more a collection of small businesses."

The Market, which is a nonprofit organization, carries an annual budget of more than \$350,000. The same organization operates the Holiday Market between Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. Market staff estimate sales that total more than \$2.5 million at Market events.

The dissemination of personal computing will further entrench the Market, Streisinger said. The more that people sit in front of a computer screen, the more the Market will be needed because, she said, "it's real and something you can touch."



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