

## Calendar

**Friday, March 3**

**Ocean and Coastal Law Symposium:** Features panels on issues surrounding the world's oceans. 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St.

**Humanities Work-in-Progress Talk:** Raymond Birn, History, discusses "How Books Were Censored in Eighteenth-Century France." Noon-1 p.m. Room 159 PLC. Free.

**Women's Film Festival:** 8 p.m. Room 177, Lawrence Hall. Free. The program will continue on Saturday and Sunday as well.



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# Tree-sit celebrity to speak

■ After ending her two-year stay in a tree, the activist will share her unique experience

By Sarah Thompson  
for the Emerald

Julia Butterfly Hill will be one of many keynote speakers at this year's Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, held on March 2 to 5.

A few months ago, Hill returned to the ground, ending the longest tree-sit in American history. In December of 1997, then 23-year-old Hill scaled a 1,000-year-old redwood, which she named

"Luna," in protest of attempts to log old-growth forests. She did not descend from her platform, 180 feet off the ground, until two years later, after the protection of the trees had been negotiated.

Hill's record-breaking tree-sit attracted national media coverage. Features in Time, Rolling Stone and Jane have turned her into an activist celebrity. Hill admits that her life has been affected by the media attention she has received, but she remains dedicated to her cause.

"My hope and goal is to build upon the success of the Luna tree-sit action by doing my best to continue the work of informing, inspiring, networking and

empowering individuals, organizations and communities to become consciously involved in creating a healthy planet intertwined with healthy people," Hill said.

Hill will be giving a keynote address on Saturday, March 4, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom as part of the public interest conference. While her theme is sure to be environmental, she would not comment on the specifics of her address.

"Before I speak, I pray, 'Peace, power, truth and love' in a mantra, open my mouth and words flow out," Hill said. "As of this time, only the creator knows exactly what I will be discussing."

## Dance

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The genesis of the tours occurred about eight years ago when Honka and a Togolese graduate student at the time, Kouessan Adaglo, set out to tape his native dances. The project turned out to be more fun than work, Honka said, and one step led to another. Soon the pair were performing at fairs and women's conferences, among other events.

Buoyed by funding from individuals within the dance department, Honka and Adaglo eventually took their shows to elementary schools. Honka is now solo in her coordinating efforts and receives a good portion of necessary funding directly from the dance department. Through a collaboration with dance instructor Charles Doggett's drumming students, the picture has become more complete.

"This is very accessible to grade school students," Honka said. "It's very difficult to bring them modern dance or a ballet."

A typical presentation includes teaching the students about different rhythms and dance movements used to convey certain messages, showing the children various hand signals used in the dances and highlighting basic geographic information about Africa.

However, the mixture of energetic, colorfully adorned dancers and mesmerizing drumming is

what captures the kids' attention.

"I really enjoyed watching our kids taking this in a real serious way," David Babcock said after Wednesday's performance at Patterson and Family Elementary in West Eugene. Babcock is a music and facilitating teacher for the combined public and alternative schools.

"I've been to some schools where you present multicultural presentations, or anything different from the All-American way, and [the students] think it's funny," he said. "Africa is a country that we really spend a lot of time discussing anyway, and this really fit into our curriculum."

"I really liked watching their whole bodies get into the rhythm of the presentation, so I get a lot out of just seeing the students learning."

The dances — with their focus on non-verbal messages and rhythms — can also help minimize potential communication obstacles. Honka referred to a Feb. 16 performance at Washington Elementary, carried out in front of a group of hearing-impaired students. She said the students could "listen" along through the drumming and dancing vibrations, as well as the hand signals.

One of the teachers "came up to me afterwards and said how wonderful it is because the songs speak with their hands and the kids are used to that," Honka said.

Both Honka and the dancers said keeping kids focused throughout the dancing has never

really posed a problem.

"All of their teachers are impressed that we can maintain their interest for that 45 minutes to an hour," Tuman said.

Although none of this year's dancers or drummers are African natives, several of the University participants have visited the area. That background certainly helps because during the question-and-answer portion of the presentation, the kids are curious about everything.

"I don't know if [our shows] create the interest or if it's already there," says drummer John Rioridan, a planning, public policy and management major, who traveled to Ghana three years ago. "It definitely helps them to think outside of their elementary schools."

The education process works both ways, Honka said. In addition to earning class credit, her dance students learn the African style, participate in all-night costume designing sessions and come away with an experience that maybe isn't attainable in a University classroom setting.

"You do this and you sometimes doubt what you're doing — I don't doubt that I'm in the right profession — until you see freshmen who have never performed before, when they walk out of an elementary school afterwards, and say, 'Oh my God, that was so exciting,'" Honka said. "You can't even imagine how that makes me feel."

## Women's Film Festival 2000

Free! March 3rd, 4th and 5th 177 Lawrence Free!

Friday, March 3rd  
8:00 p.m.

Wilma P. Mankiller  
The Orientation Express  
The F-Word  
Battle For The Minds

Saturday, March 4th  
8:00 p.m.

Sex and the Sandanistas  
Calling the Ghosts  
Wavelengths  
The Ladies Room

Sunday, March 5th  
3:00 p.m.

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