

# Mountain biking 101 — a crash course

Novice and experienced mountain bikers are invited to participate in a free course at the McKenzie River Trail

By Inge Scheve  
for the Emerald

The UO Outdoor Program is holding a free mountain biking clinic Saturday aimed at teaching beginning and intermediate riders essential trail skills and trail etiquette.

Outdoor Program staff member Suzanne Hanlon hopes the clinic can eliminate some of the fright and insecurity of trail riding to make it a more enjoyable and less painful experience.

"It'll be a lot like us sharing the hard knocks before you have to experience them," Hanlon said. Hanlon, who has lead several similar clinics in Montana, will deliver the clinic along with Ed

Fredette of the UO Outdoor Program.

After loading up the bikes at 9 a.m., a van will take participants to the McKenzie Ranger Station area.

The McKenzie River Trail offers something for every ability level. A rolling terrain builds experience in beginners, while advanced riders can find challenges in the lava section farther up river from the trail head.

"McKenzie River Trail is the best," Hanlon said. "It's beautiful, and you can hear the water all the way."

Lava is a unique surface to ride on, Hanlon said. "And it hurts if you make a mistake!" As an

added bonus, if participants would like to come back to this trail in the future, they can take the LTD bus to the McKenzie Ranger Station for free, where the trail begins. This way, they don't have to worry about finding a ride or how to cram their bikes into the tin can if they find one, Hanlon said.

During the drive, Hanlon will deliver the first part of the clinic — a low-down on trail etiquette. Once there, the obstacle course will teach in a hands-on manner how to conquer trail features, such as roots, rocks and creases, maintain traction, increase balance and manage multiple obstacles without becoming overwhelmed.

An obstacle course highlight is Hanlon's "bike ballet" designed to hone riding balance skills.

Finally, riders try to match their skills to the challenges of the McKenzie River Trail terrain.

"It's all about gaining control over the route rather than being subject to the route," Hanlon said.

The free clinic is by sign-up only, and limited to about ten participants. The only costs are gas expenses and collective van rental, which should add up to approximately \$5 per person. The van leaves the Outdoor Program Barn at 9 a.m. sharp and returns about 5:30 p.m.

Participants must sport a positive attitude, bring plenty of smiles, wear a helmet, and bring their own bikes, appropriate clothing, water and a sack lunch. More information, sign-up and trip details are available at the UO Outdoor Program office in the EMU or by calling 346-4365.

# Improv can improve your sense of humor

Workshops create improvisational fun for business groups, families or individuals looking for some 'off the collar' fun

By Kristy Hessman  
Oregon Daily Emerald

For Enid Lefton, life isn't a stage. It's an improv.

The Cleveland, Ohio, native has been performing with the Eugene-based improvisational comedy troupe WYMPROV! since 1991 and has been studying improvisational theater for more than ten years. During this time, she has found that "the rules for improv are a lot like rules for life ... you need to have fun and laugh ... you also need to support each other."

Now, Enid is teaching these rules to others through her Life Is An Improv programs and workshops, as well as expanding her services to include a new family workshop, Playshop For Families.

The workshops focus on using improvisation techniques and games to build an atmosphere where people can come together, create and laugh.

"The workshops are also good for team building and communi-

cation skills," Lefton says.

Along with classes, Lefton has been asked to teach at a number of work retreats and business conferences. That is how Patty Layman first met Enid.

"The first workshop I attended was at Oregon State University as part of a conference," Layman said.

After attending the conference, Layman started bringing her daughter and her friend to Lefton's other workshops.

"I had studied a little bit of stand-up comedy at Lane Community College, but I continued to take the workshops because I wanted to learn to work more off the cuff," Layman said.

Others who take the classes say they find them to be more of an ad-

diction. "It's like smoking," workshop participant Cris Piccioni said. "I just can't quit."

Piccioni has been attending workshops on and off for about 15 months.

"If I don't do it for a while, I find that I really need to go back again and loosen up," she said.

Participants say that the exercises in class reflect many real life situations.

"The exercises point out how negative daily interactions can be, without us even realizing it," Piccioni said.

The techniques that Lefton teaches also are meant to create open minds.

"I went because I am kind of shy," improv participant Debbie Newman said. "I thought that it might help, and it did. It's absolutely amazing!"

Participants particularly like the environment that the classes

offer.

"You get to go there and be a kid; it's like playing house," Newman said. "No one is there to judge you. It is a really good learning environment."

In her current project, Lefton is opening up to a new group. Playshop For Families will take place on Saturday, and will provide a safe environment for families of all shapes, sizes and ages to have some fun and learn some games to play at home.

"It will be interesting to see how it will work combining different ages and families together," Lefton said.

Past participants encourage people of all ages to experience the workshops.

"Anyone who has lost their ability to play should really look into this," Layman said.

Newman agreed.

"I recommend it to everyone, it really unblocks your mind."

For more information, contact Enid Lefton at 345-2067 or email at enidl@rio.com.

**“You get to go there and be a kid; it's like playing house.”**

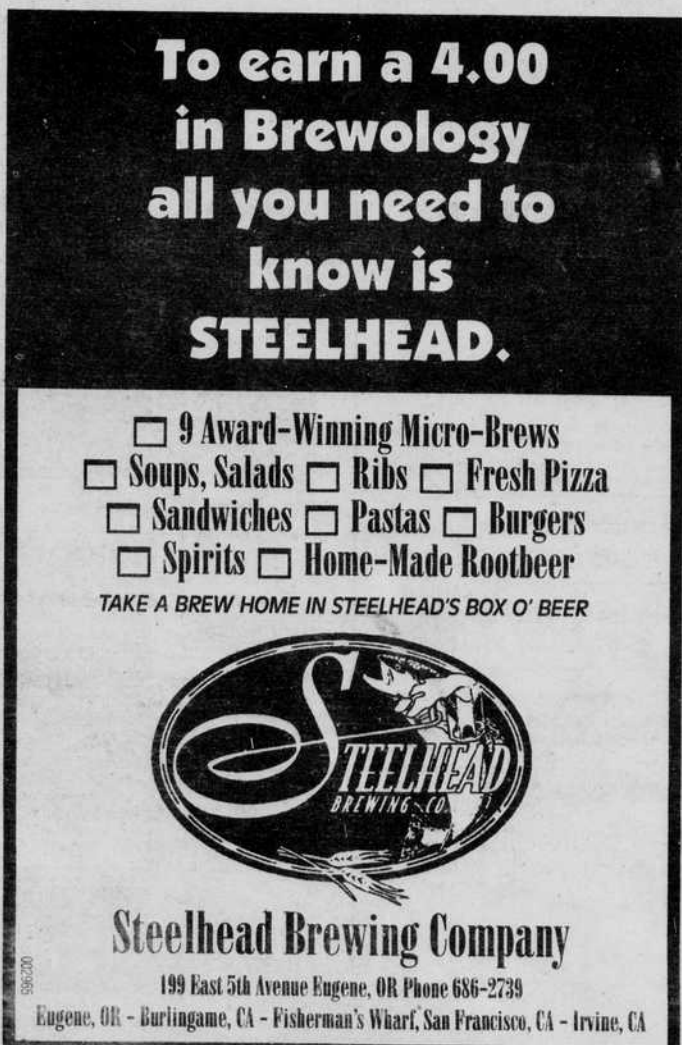
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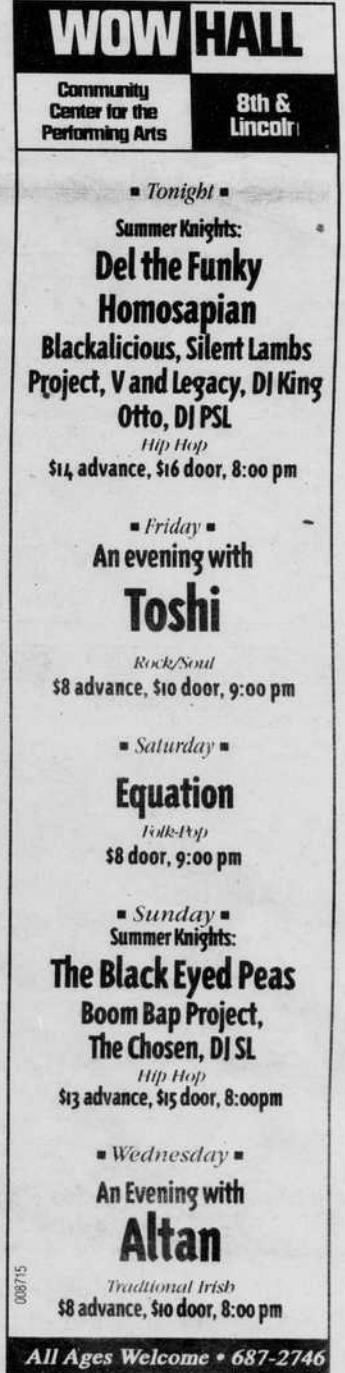
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