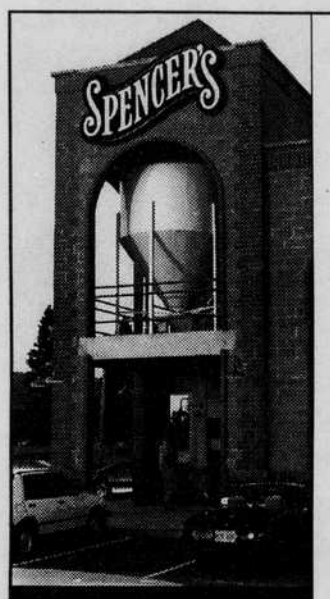

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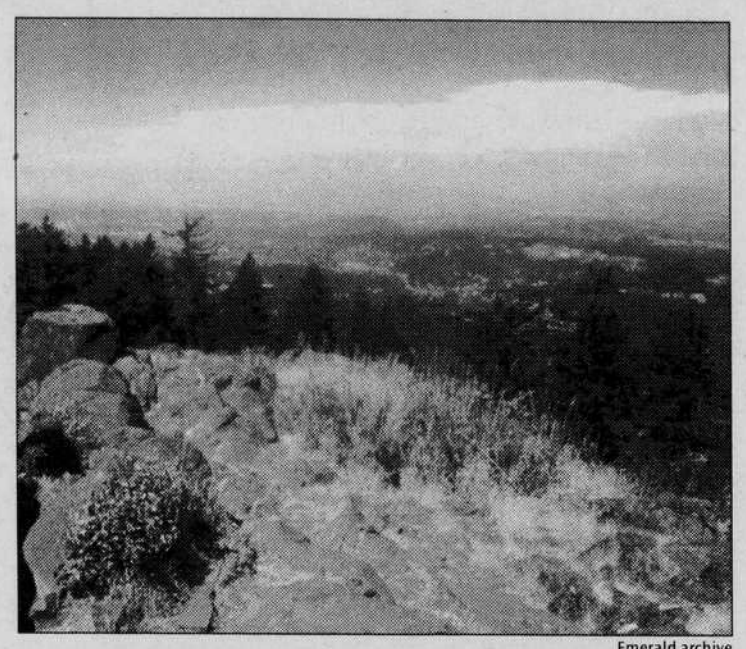
Local outdoors offers fresh fun

■ Take a unique romp at any one of the many regional parks, lakes or outdoor recreation areas

By Michael Lundeen
for the Emerald

Whether you need to escape the hustle and bustle or are just in search of a cool place to spend an afternoon, the Eugene area has plenty of the great outdoors to choose from. This collection of getaways is organized by proximity to campus into Nearby Nature and Afternoon Adventures.

Most are free or cost only a $3 day-use fee for vehicles, and nearly all of them are accessible by the local bus system, LTD, which is free for students with current ID.



Emerald archive

The top of Spencer Butte in south Eugene offers a full view of the surrounding Willamette Valley. Take Willamette Street south until you see the signs for the trail.

Nearby nature

Alton Baker Park — Directly north of the University, beyond the Millrace Labs and over the footbridge, lies Alton Baker Park.

Along with Alton Baker, several other parks such as Maury Jacobs, Kiwanis and West Skinner Butte are linked together by paved paths to form a chain of parks along the north and south banks of the Willamette River. These parks stretch out their paths for miles from the Springfield city limits westward through Eugene all the way to River Road. Some of the paths are lighted at night, but most are not.

In Alton Baker Park, you can also find miles of bark running trails throughout its many acres of fields, old filbert orchards and wooded areas. The center of a scale model of our solar system is here, too — the softball-sized Jupiter is nearly a mile away on the other side of the river in West Skinner Butte Park.

Further west along the river path, past Skinner Butte — the big hill just north of downtown — you'll find George Owens Park and its rose gardens. All along the way, private spots and riverside seats can be found.

Hendricks Park — East of campus about a half mile, Hendricks Park can be found at the top of Hendricks Hill. Summit Avenue, off Fairmount Boulevard, runs along the base of the hill and takes you up to the park. Walk or bike a few hundred feet and you'll find the rhododendron garden and views of downtown Eugene that this park is known for.

Masonic Cemetery — Enjoy tranquil seclusion, views of Eugene and learn some of Eugene's history while you're at it. The Masonic Cemetery, directly south of campus where University Street meets the cemetery at 25th Avenue, is where many of the founding citizens of Eugene are buried.

Up on this wooded hill cemetery you will find the namesakes of campus buildings and Eugene streets such as Skinner, Friendly, Condon, Chambers and many more.

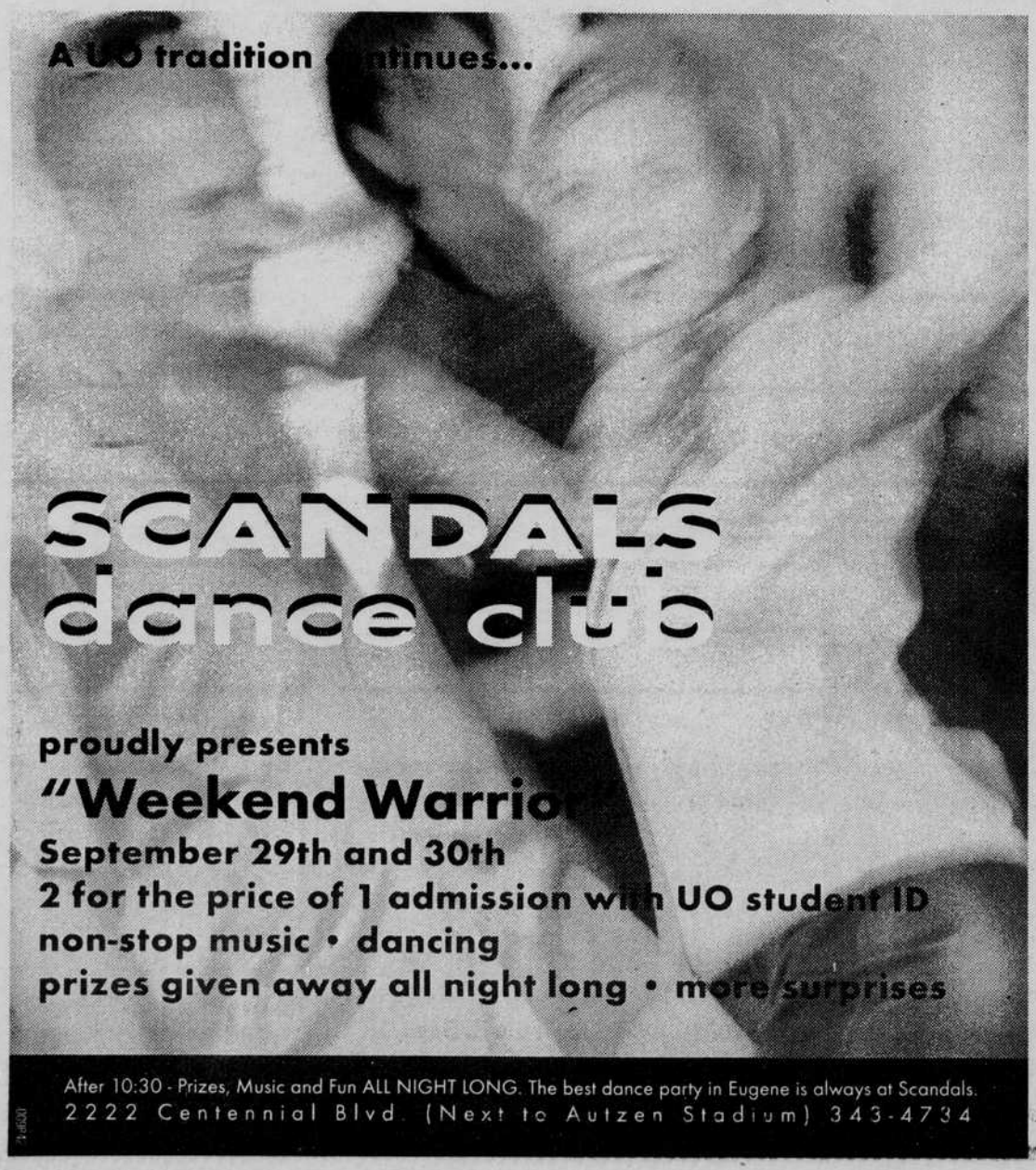
Informational brochures are available at the cemetery.

Afternoon adventures

Cougar Hot Springs — Spend the morning or afternoon hiking or swimming and finish the trip with a soak in a steamy hot spring at Cougar Reservoir.

The reservoir is about an hour east of Eugene, south off Highway 126. The parking lot is approximately a 20-minute drive from Highway 126. The easy half-mile hike to the spring begins near the

Turn to **Outdoors**, page 13D



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