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Dieringer

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fluid surrounding a person's brain and spinal cord.

Common symptoms of meningococcal disease include high fevers, headaches and stiff necks. Additional symptoms could range from nausea and vomiting to confusion and sleepiness, according to the Center for Disease Control's Web site.

"You just don't expect someone who is young and vibrant to go from having a sore throat one day to dying," said Mike Eyster, University Housing director. "It's a terrible shock. We're still not sure where she got it."

At a press conference Saturday in the University Housing office, Dieringer's sorority sisters in Kappa Delta, members of University Housing and one of her professors described her as a future leader in the Greek System, intelligent, giving and "a constant smile."

"We were really excited to see what she could do in the future," said Kelsey Mitchell, Kappa Delta president.

Dieringer, an only child from the Portland area, volunteered at a number of places in the Eugene community, including Sacred Heart and Edison Elementary School.

Mitchell added that Dieringer had discussed a general interest in studying medicine, and Kappa Delta members heavily recruited Dieringer to pledge the sorority because of her personality and leadership skills.

Taka Takeuchi, an assistant complex director for Hamilton Complex, which includes Cloran Hall, said Dieringer was one of the first students in the complex to volunteer to be a hall president.

News of Dieringer's death moved rapidly through the residence halls, and Takeuchi said University counselors held a special meeting for students Friday night in Cloran Hall. Meetings were also held at Kappa Delta.

"I was surprised when I went to

my class and students already knew," Takeuchi said. "In my hall, there was sadness and fear about this disease."

A person can catch the bacteria that cause meningitis through prolonged or close contact with an infected person. Eyster said such contact can include kissing, sharing the same eating utensils or being coughed upon, but the bacteria cannot survive for more than a few minutes outside of the human body.

Skellcerf added that another risk factor is living in the residence halls, where the small, crowded spaces can create a greater risk of contraction.

She said most of the time when people are exposed to meningococcal disease, their immune systems can handle it without difficulty.

But occasionally, an "invasive disease" occurs, and the person can die within 48 hours. Skellcerf said the invasive disease is so rare that probably less than 1 percent of people who are exposed will develop symptoms.

But while quelling concerns of other cases of meningitis, Dieringer's friends and sorority sisters are also trying to begin the process of healing and grieving her sudden death. As five of her sorority members held hands, hugged each other and fought back tears on Saturday, they said everyone in the house is dealing with the grief differently.

"It goes in waves, goes in ups and downs, but we're all there for each other," Kappa Delta member Amalia Groebe said.

Mitchell said the sorority is discussing turning Dieringer's tragedy into a philanthropy and raising money for awareness of the disease and how it is spread.

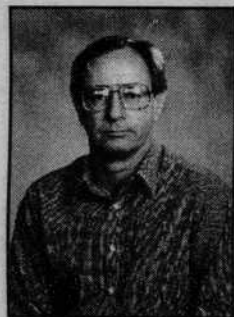
But Kappa Delta member Jackie Reed said those decisions will be made when the pain of their loss goes away, if it ever will completely stop.

"I talked to a friend and she told me ... the pain never goes away. You have to get used to it," she said. "I don't know why, [but] that's a comfort to me."

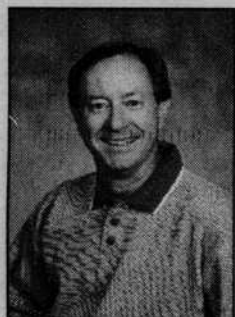
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Candidates

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run about three weeks ago, when Nair agreed to join her ticket.

Brooklyn said she and Nair have been talking to people who work with the ASUO, finding out what they like and the changes they want to see in the Executive office.

Presidential candidate Eric Bailey, the current vice president of the Student Senate, has also been considering the race for a long time. Bailey said he spoke with fellow senators during winter break, including Sen. C.J. Gabbe, who ran for Executive last year, and decided to run shortly before winter term began.

"But I first had to decide what my platform would be," he said.

Bailey, a sophomore, has enlisted the help of junior Jeff Oliver, ASUO housing advocate, as his running mate. They are both in the early stages of their campaign, planning events and talking to student groups.

As usual, a number of candidates from outside student politics have thrown in their hats. Bret Jacobson, a former Oregon Daily Emerald columnist, said he spent the past months learning more about how student government works and gradually decided to run.

"I found I had the desire and the drive to try to make a positive difference," Jacobson said.

Jacobson, and his running mate, Matt Cook, are both juniors.

There will also be a handful of candidates running for the office on humorous platforms, and, as in previous years, some are staff members at the Oregon Commentator.

Candidates for 2001 ASUO Executive (in alphabetical order):

- Eric Bailey and Jeff Oliver
- Nilda Brooklyn and Joy Nair
- Sho Ikeda
- Bret Jacobson and Matthew Cook
- Eric Qualheim and Brian Boone

Source: ASUO Elections Board

Eric Qualheim will run with Brian Boone, a staff writer for the Commentator. Qualheim said they decided to run after watching last year's contest.

"We couldn't possibly do worse than the people last year, so we decided to try this year," he said.

Qualheim jokingly wrote in his candidate statement that he ran for third grade president on a platform of abolitionism and that Boone was raised by pirates off the coast of Ireland.

But as the pair prepare to bombard the campus with publicity about who they are and what they would do if elected, Qualheim said he and Boone aren't sure how serious their campaign will become.

"One thing we're sure of is that we would do a good job," Qualheim said.

Commentator photographer Sho Ikeda will also run, but without a vice presidential candidate. He could not be reached for comment before press time.

Junior Brad Schatzel, who filed only minutes before the election deadline on Friday, also could not be reached for comment before press time.