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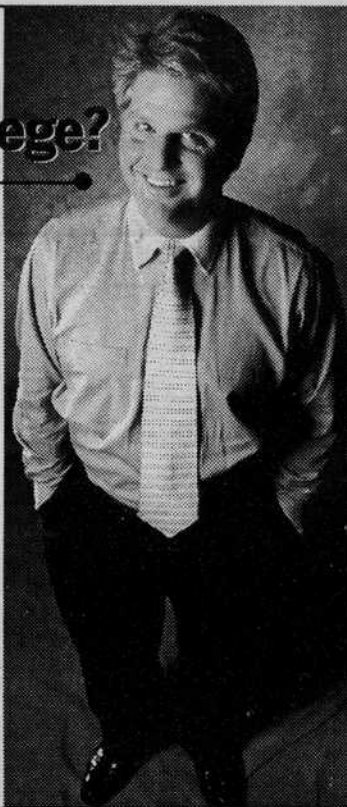
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Oregon Daily Emerald

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Parading around

The Ducks on Parade committee will place about 30 decorated duck statues around the city

By Brook Reinhard
Oregon Daily Emerald

When retired schoolteacher Linda Wheatley visited her daughter in Maine last summer, she didn't expect the trip to have an impact on the Eugene community.

She never counted on the Bears on Parade.

The city of Belfast, Maine, had 50 life-sized bear statues placed all over town as tourist attractions, and Wheatley latched onto the idea.

"It was a dying town, and this project revitalized it," Wheatley said.

The bears all were decorated by local artists and employed various themes.

"They even had an American Bearlines statue," she said.

Wheatley took the idea back to Oregon and gave it a local twist: The Ducks on Parade committee is using her idea to place 25 to 30 decorated duck statues all over Eugene.

"We want people to come down and see these things," Wheatley said. "It will enliven downtown."

The 12-member committee has been meeting since January to plan the project, which aims to add color to the downtown area and raise money for local charities through an eventual auction of the figures. If all goes well, the first few ducks will be unveiled by the time Broadway reopens.

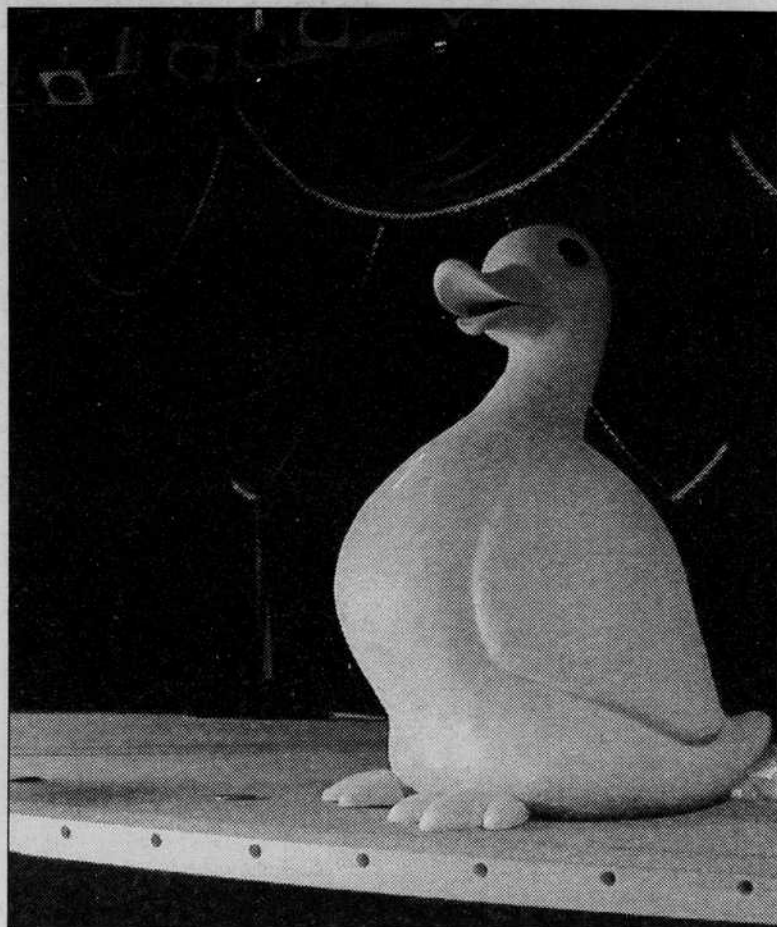
"Our goal is getting it kicked off in time for the Broadway opening," said committee member Jay Moore. The group has already received its first 175-pound duck from Lincoln City sculptor Joyce Beemer, and more of the \$1,000 figures are on the way.

The committee is already accepting duck designs from local artists. Wheatley said 25 designs have been submitted and 12 sponsors have committed to the project so far.

Moore said the group will look at as many designs as possible. The limiting factor is finding a sponsor, who can pay anywhere from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to secure a duck for the summer and fall.

"The challenge is, we have to marry every design with a sponsor," Moore said.

Some of the more notable designs submitted thus far include Dead Duck, a tribute to Jerry Garcia, Tie-Dye Duck, Organic Food Duck and the ever-elusive Sunny Day Duck. Artists will be paid \$500 for their efforts and will receive a por-



Thomas Patterson Emerald

A 7-foot-tall 'Duck on Parade' rests onstage at the Wild Duck Brewery. 'It's definitely different than I thought it would be,' said Wild Duck general manager Timothy Meyer.

tion of the auction proceeds when the ducks are sold for charity later this year.

Similar parade projects have been popping up all over the country. Chicago and Kansas City hosted the Cows on Parade project, Seattle had Pigs on Parade and the cows visited Portland this year.

But the duck idea is unique to Eugene. Mayor Jim Torrey has personally sponsored two of the figures, and the University has committed to one as well. Students shouldn't expect to see a six-foot tall fiberglass mascot anytime soon, however.

"I don't think one of them will be Donald (Duck)," cautioned Barbara West, special counsel to President Dave Frohnmayer. "We're always having complications with Walt Disney."

The University is planning to hold a design contest among art and architecture students.

Students staying in Eugene over the summer should look for the first duck to be unveiled at Art & The

Vineyard 2002, a July festival held at Alton Baker Park. The portly figure should be hard to miss.

"It's not a skinny duck, it's a plump duck," Wheatley said. "It's got a bit of an attitude."

Most of the ducks will be placed downtown, but some will be mobile enough to take promotional trips. This raises possible security questions, as statues in other cities have been vandalized in the past. One pig statue in Seattle was repeatedly taken for joyrides at night, forcing sponsors to chain up the figure.

"We know statues have been assaulted in every city," Wheatley said. The committee is planning on bolting the ducks to the ground.

Nevertheless, the group is depending on students and community members to be responsible with Eugene's newest tourist attraction.

"Please do not carry our ducks away, we need them," committee member Michelle Emmons said.

E-mail reporter Brook Reinhard



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