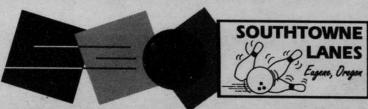
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academic year 2003-04

March 11th, 3 p.m. EMU Walnut Room

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Questions: Donna Chittendon 346-3044, Office of Resource Management

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Wednesday

"Balanchine in Hollywood" (talk by dance historian and Professor Beth Genné, the Robert M. Trotter visiting professor from the University of Michigan, fourth in a series of five presentations), 10 a.m.-11:50 a.m., Dougherty Dance Theatre, Gerlinger Annex, free, 346-5678. Campus buzz

"Women in Public in Early Republican China" (discussion led by Bryna Goodman, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Society), noon-1 p.m., 330 Hendricks, free, 346-5015.

"NASA: The Conquest of Space" (talk by NASA pilots Col. Edwin W. Lewis Jr., retired, and Col. Gordon Fullerton, part of the class "The Epic of Flight"), 2 p.m.-3:20 p.m., EMU Fir Room, free, 484-4032.

Dance Quarterly (once-a-term dance concert), 7 p.m., Dougherty Dance Theatre,
Gerlinger Annex, free, 346-3386. "Climbing
North America's Mountains: Alaska to
Mexico" (talk by mountaineer Fred Beckey,
sponsored by the Oregon State University
Mountain Club), 7:30 p.m., OSU Memorial
Union Ballroom, free.

Meetings promote unity

Prayer meetings bring people from different faiths together to promote religious and cultural understanding

Roman Gokhman

Campus/City Culture Reporter

What began as a way to cope with the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, is now a monthly communion of faith with different religious groups in Eugene.

Interfaith Prayer and Reflection Service, an event organized by Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries and held the 11th day of every month, brings people of different faiths together to nurture understanding and appreciation of their respective beliefs.

The first prayer meeting was held Oct. 11, 2001, and TRIM Steering Committee member Ginny Nilsensaid the meetings have included panels of speakers that focus on social activism and spiritual matters. Speakers have included representatives from different faiths, people with expertise in religion and members of student groups. Muslim Student Association members will make a presentation in April and University religious studies professor Timothy Gianotti will talk about Islam in May.

At today's service, University student and member of the Baha'i faith Eric Parchen said he will recite a prayer of spiritual growth that was revealed to the prophet Baha'u'llah.

Parchen said he attends the prayer meetings regularly because they provide a chance for people to come together without prejudice.

"It promotes unity within the community," he said. "I thought it would be nice to share with the group."

Nilsen said TRIM's original plan



Courtesy

Along with various speakers, TRIM meetings feature music, dance and drumming.

was to hold the prayer services for three months, but the time frame was extended because of the services' popularity.

"It just was so powerful," she said.
"It's an hour of holy ground."

Currently, at least 250 people attend the services, held at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church at 1166 Oak St. Nilsen said there are usually 10 presenters from various organized religions, sects and spiritual movements, including Muslims, Mormons, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Sufi, Sikh Dharmas, Christians, Jews, Native Americans and Unitarian-Universalists.

"There's no proselytizing — we don't try to make others believe what you believe," Nilsen said. "It's a bit of education to show an audience what's involved in our practice. We're looking for what we have in common."

Besides prayer, Nilsen said the meetings include music, dancing, drumming and chanting.

"It's like planning a float in a parade," she said. "It's a creative expression of the divine — how we worship, how we pray."

Besides the monthly prayer meetings, TRIM also coordinates two monthly discussion groups; "Heart to Heart," a weekly Register-Guard column that deals with spiritual understanding, identity, relationships, reality and purpose; and Faith in Action, a group of social activists who support community movements like anti-war rallies.

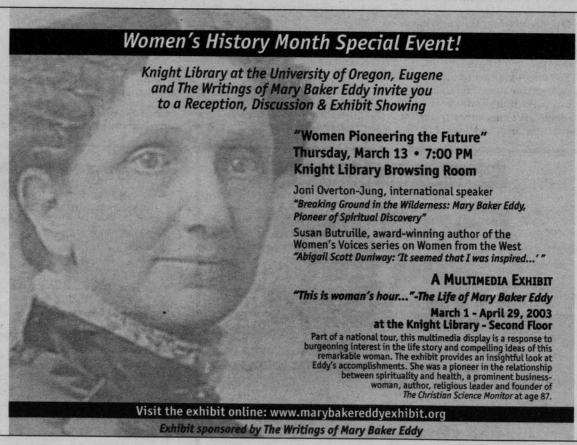
Siri Kaur Khalsa, a member of TRIM, said the group's activities provide a respite from the bad things that happen every day, and that Faith in Action is an outlet to make a political statement in peaceful ways.

"We can do more than wage war in the name of God," she said.

Nilsen said the prayer meetings have been so successful because they are based on a spiritual nature that transcends religious doctrine.

"We want to know what other people believe," she said. "What's meaningful to our neighbor, what brings comfort and inspiration and enlightenment."

Contact the reporter at romangokhman@dailyemerald.com.



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