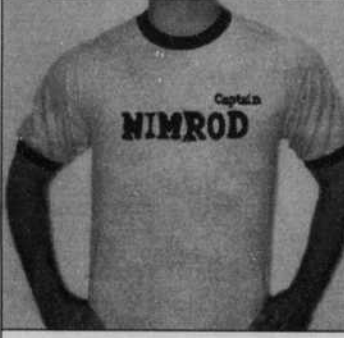


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**O** UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

# Abandoned park plans uncertain

The West University Park sparks debate among nearby neighbors concerned about safety

By A. Sho Ikeda  
Senior News Reporter

Sitting between Hilyard Street and Patterson Street on 14th Avenue is a patch of land about half the size of a soccer field. Street lights dimly illuminate the far side of the park, while homes and apartment buildings line its darkened boundaries. Weeds grow between cracks in the brick tiled pathway that connects the dry grass field to the sidewalk. An aging brown sign with curvy white lettering tells passersby the name of this no man's land: West University Neighborhood Park.

The park has been off-limits to the public since 1995. Now, West University residents, business owners and other community members will begin to discuss the future of the abandoned parcel of land. With the West University Task Force and the newly re-formed West University Neighborhood Association raising concerns about crime and quality of life in the area, the park has become an important issue regarding the vitality of the neighborhood.

Steven Baker, a West University resident, said there are "mixed feelings in the neighborhood" about the park.

"There are some people who think that (the city) should open the park and there are others who want to keep it closed," Baker said.

Baker, who has lived in the West University neighborhood since 1973, said residents of the area were concerned with transients and other individuals who frequented the park during the years it was open. He said certain people were using the park for drug deals, public drinking and other disruptive behavior.

The West University Neighborhood Park closed in 1995 when tenants, landlords and property owners asked the city to close it because of criminal activity stemming

from it. The city became concerned with the welfare and safety of residents near the park and stated it had "become a haven for illegal activities" and created "an atmosphere that is unfit and unsafe," according to a city administrative order ordering the closure of the park in November 1995.

City Park Planner John Weber said the park's location on 14th Avenue limited its visibility, which led to many of the problems it experienced. With one side facing 14th Avenue and privately owned land separating it from Hilyard and Patterson Streets, the park is otherwise surrounded by building, fences and trees.

Weber said after the park's closure, the Eugene City Council searched for options to improve it, such as purchasing land to extend its boundaries to a nearby street such as Hilyard Street. However, purchasing more land for the park was too costly for the city at the time.

Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly said purchasing adjacent property to extend the park's boundaries to either Hilyard or Patterson Street is a possibility now, but nothing is currently planned by the city.

Kelly also said there has been interest by property developers to purchase the park from the city and build residential housing on the site. However, he added that careful consideration would have to be taken before any plans to sell the park were to be made.

"We shouldn't sell it to the highest bidder," Kelly said. "We have to determine what would be best for that site."

The West University Neighborhood Association will hold a meeting on Nov. 5 to discuss issues regarding the area, including the West University Neighborhood Park. The meeting will be held at Central Presbyterian Church, 555 E. 15th Ave., Room 121 at 7 p.m. For more information regarding the meeting, contact City Neighborhood Liaison Steve Norris at 682-5009.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at [shoikeda@dailymerald.com](mailto:shoikeda@dailymerald.com).

## WUSHU

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with schools such as Stanford, the University of California at Berkeley and UCLA all competing. Dang took first place in the all-around men's competition, and he was also accepted to the U.S. Wushu team over the summer, although he is now an alternate.

Members of the club are also trained with a few weapons: a straight sword, a broad sword, a staff and a whip chain.

Cortez is one of the few girls on the team and said she loves it. She started Wushu last year with no training and Dang said she has come a long way.

Members of the club practice

four times a week: Mondays and Fridays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Fridays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Practices take place at the Student Recreation Center.

The University team is always looking for more participants. For more information, visit the club's Web site at [www.geocities.com/uowushu](http://www.geocities.com/uowushu), or attend a Wushu practice.

Dang said he is excited about the talent on the team as they train for upcoming competitions.

"We're pretty successful," he said. "It's inspiring."

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at [alishaughnessy@dailymerald.com](mailto:alishaughnessy@dailymerald.com).

## NEWS BRIEFS

### DPS releases annual safety report

The Department of Public Safety recently released an annual report of campus safety and security programs and services in compliance with federal law.

DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks said the report is available, on request, to current and prospective University students and employees and is also available online at [http://safetyweb.uoregon.edu/safety/crime\\_stats.htm](http://safetyweb.uoregon.edu/safety/crime_stats.htm).

The report has crime statistics for the past three years on crimes that occurred at the University in certain off-campus buildings owned or controlled by the University and on public property immediately adjacent to the University.

Institutional policies regarding matters such as drug and alcohol use, crime prevention and sexual assault are also included in the report.

For more information, contact DPS at 346-5444.

—Ali Shaughnessy

### ASUO approves funding for students to attend 'Creating Change' conference

The ASUO Student Senate approved a \$2,000 request Wednesday to enable seven students involved in the University's gay community to attend a conference in Miami. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Educational and Support Services plans to send the students to the "Creating Change" conference.

ASUO Vice President Eddy Morales spoke in support of the proposal, which passed 15-0.

"Our University does not have the safe space for the conversations that will happen there," Morales said early in the three-hour meeting.

The senate also narrowly denied a request for \$5,385 from the Women's Center to put on the "The Vagina Monologues," a popular performance event. The senate considered loaning the money to the Women's Center or allowing it to deficit spend, but the senators could not agree and the motion failed, 7-8.

"We don't have to figure this out tonight," Harding said. "We can take the week to look at this."

The senate also delayed approving mission and goal statements for the Unitarian Universalist campus group, angering the group's coordinator, Jandyra Dohofsky.

Senate President Ben Strawn said the senate needed more time to learn about mission and goal statements.

"We've never done it before," Strawn said. "We don't want to approve something that would be illegal."

The senate also approved a \$250 request from the Black Student Union and a \$50 request from the African Student Association.

—Chuck Slothower

## CAMPUS BUZZ

**Friday**  
Lillis Business Complex opening, 11 a.m., Lillis Hall atrium, free. University President Dave Frohnmayer and Lundquist College of Business Dean Philip Romero will hold public ribbon-cutting ceremonies to mark the complex's opening. Entertainment and a barbecue will follow the event.

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<b>DEB CLEVELAND BAND</b> HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY! FRIDAY OCTOBER 31 COSTUME PRIZES! SOUL 9:30 PM	<b>TIM McLAUGHLIN'S 11 EYES</b> w/ THE TURNTABLE ENABLER SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 JAZZ FUNK FUSION 9:30 PM

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**Oregon Daily Emerald**  
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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