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**5 DAYS
UNTIL
primaries**

Program for ex-cons may move to UO area

Some West University residents are concerned a purchased house could potentially hold sex offenders

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

A nonprofit organization that works with parolees and ex-convicts is looking to purchase a house in the West University neighborhood to provide a place where clients can live together in a supervised environment.

Flyers have been circulating in the neighborhood denouncing Sponsors, Inc. for the plan, claiming the organization works primarily with sex offenders and did not disclose that information when the West University Neighbors association passed a resolution in support of the organization at its March 3 meeting.

City officials and representatives from Sponsors, Inc. said such claims are unfounded and show a lack of knowledge about the program.

Ron Chase, executive director of Sponsors, Inc., said no decision has been made about whether sex offenders will live in the neighborhood house and said more information is expected to be finalized in late spring and early summer.

Sponsors, Inc. is open about its program and encourages open dialogue in the neighborhood and throughout the community, Chase said.

"There has been absolutely no attempt to conceal what we're doing," he said.

Though it was not discussed at the March 3 meeting that some of the organization's clientele are registered sex offenders, Chase said the growing percentage of sex offenders in the prison population is such that it should be expected that post-prison supervision programs would be dealing with some of them.

Chase estimated there are between 75-100 parolees and ex-convicts living in the West University neighborhood. He said Sponsors, Inc. is looking to have better supervision for those people by providing them with a place to live and interact with employees from the organization.

The anonymous flyer circulating around the West University neighborhood states that the neighborhood association's vote in favor of the organization's plans "was held without adequate disclosure, and without the knowledge and consent of the vast majority of the neighborhood."

West University Neighbors Chairman Drix Rixmann said the resolution the association passed merely agreed to open discussion with Sponsors, Inc.

"We didn't open the pearly gate and do all this other stuff," Rixmann said.

No formal agreement about whether to support the program's presence in the neighborhood was reached, and more discussion about the details of the program will take place in the months to come, Rixmann said.

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy was listed on the flyer as a person to contact with concerns. Piercy wrote in an e-mail that she was not involved in the production of the flyer and is very supportive of Sponsors, Inc. and the program's work in the community.

SPONSORS, page 5

\$25,000 in musical instruments stolen

Two men were arrested for allegedly breaking into two students' lockers in the music school and stealing a cello and euphonium

BY EMILY SMITH
NEWS REPORTER

The Eugene Police Department arrested two men Wednesday night after they allegedly stole musical instruments valued at more than \$25,000 from student lockers inside the University School of Music.

EPD spokeswoman Kerry Delf said the two suspects, Ronnie Brett Kerr, 35, and Nicholas Turre Jason, 26, were already wanted for separate criminal incidents. Kerr is being held at the Lane County Jail and is being charged with burglary 2 and aggravated theft 1. Jason was taken into custody and cited on the same charges but was released for medical reasons.

Music major Derek Newell, 28, almost lost his handmade cello, valued at more than \$20,000, when Kerr and Jason first entered the school around 5:30 p.m. and broke into Newell's locker, Delf said.

Delf said the two men then returned and took University music student Skyler Johnson's \$5,500 euphonium, but it wasn't until their third time entering the building at around 8:30 p.m.

that they were spotted by Johnson, who alerted EPD and Department of Public Safety officers already investigating the burglary and in the process of reviewing video evidence.

Delf said the officers ran up the stairs to find Kerr standing next to a locker, holding Johnson's CD player.

An EPD officer arrested Kerr immediately, while Jason led a DPS officer on a foot pursuit for about two blocks until he was apprehended on the corner of Patterson Street and East 18th Avenue.

Upon locating the suspects' yellow Toyota pickup, police discovered the cello, horn, burglary tools and a bike known to have been stolen from campus, all hidden under a tarp in the truck's bed.

Kerr was arraigned Thursday, and Jason is scheduled to appear in court April 13. No trials have yet been set.

Janet Stewart, the assistant to the dean of the School of Music, said Wednesday's burglars

were either "very stupid or very bold." She said the area of the music building in question is "highly traveled," and with the burglars' bolt cutters, "they were ready to seize the moment, and they did."

Stewart also said the room housing the lockers was locked.

Delf said there were 42 burglaries and 405 theft cases reported during 2004 on the University campus.

DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks said so far this year, there have been only four burglaries.

Delf said Eugene's property crime rate is "higher than what's typical for a city of our size," and "it's mostly related to meth use." She also said the University is often targeted by property criminals because students

are inexperienced in locking up their property.

Delf recommends using two bike locks — a Kryptonite and a cable lock are best — because a thief most likely won't want to take the extra time to break both locks. She also suggests renters' insurance to students living in the area.

"It's cheap, but kids don't think to get it until it's too late," Delf said.

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RONNIE BRETT KERR
SUSPECT



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Kenyan novelist and human rights activist Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke at the Knight Law School Wednesday.

Speaking his MIND

Acclaimed Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke about his life experiences and their connection to language and memory

BY AMANDA BOLSINGER
NEWS REPORTER

Former political prisoner and exile Ngugi wa Thiong'o captivated an audience of more than 250 people Wednesday evening as he discussed his life, his academic work and his activism.

The University hosted the acclaimed Kenyan novelist for a lecture in the Knight Law Center on "Planting African Memory: The Role of a Scholar in a Postcolonial World."

During the hour-and-a-half event, Thiong'o

focused on the connection between language and memory and the role that connection has played in his work.

Thiong'o was invited to the University by members of the African Studies committee, who were searching for a lecturer who would appeal to several departments.

"We were brainstorming, and his name came up as most important in many departments," anthropology and international studies professor

KENYA, page 4

Professor patents usage of gold particles in transistors

Jim Hutchison 'bottom-up' method improves upon miniaturization technology and may eventually be developed for consumer products

BY EVA SYLWESTER
NEWS REPORTER

University chemistry professor Jim Hutchison received a patent on Tuesday for his work toward the continuing miniaturization of technology. He developed a way to make transistors, used in electronic devices to amplify signals, out of extremely tiny particles of gold.

"In the future we'll be able to put millions and millions and billions of these things in the size of a wristwatch and have the power of a desktop computer," Hutchison said.

Hutchison said every 18 months the size of

transistors in consumer electronic devices shrinks by a factor of two, meaning that the number of transistors on each microchip doubles and the performance of the devices that use the transistors also doubles.

"This is why every two years, people want to buy a new computer," he said.

However, Hutchison said the current method of building smaller transistors is becoming inadequate. A transistor consists of an input end, an output end and a switch in between. As the distance between the input and output ends

BUILDING A TINY TRANSISTOR

1. A gold nanoparticle (100 atoms together) is surrounded by surface molecules that bind to the outside, much like a Koosh ball.

2. The surface molecules of the gold nanoparticles bind to a strand of DNA from a virus. The DNA is used as a structural support, not for genetic material.

3. The strings of nanoparticles are set up between electrode contacts so electrons flow from one contact to another.

Source: Jim Hutchison,
University chemistry professor

BRET FURTWANGLER
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

