

APS: Checking backgrounds assures safety

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APS operates vans to provide rides for an average of 70 people per night, according to the group's Web site. The organization employs eight staff members and 16 dispatchers and uses about 80 volunteers each year, according to the site.

Wells said volunteers undergo a training process. If a volunteer coordinator doesn't approve of a volunteer during training, they "have an opportunity to 'suggest a different type of volunteer work'" for that person.

She said APS drivers' traffic records are checked because they must be certified to drive through the University.

Wells said APS considered background checks as a way to increase safety for riders after Project Safaride and Night Ride merged last year.

She added that APS should be able to check its workers' backgrounds,

especially because some riders may be survivors of past assaults.

"I feel it's a pretty valid case," she said. "It just seems kind of counter-intuitive that we wouldn't be able to do that."

Wells said APS members are still interested in conducting the checks but are faced with more pressing issues because the organization lost paid positions during this year's budget process.

She said if checks are not allowed, the organization will continue to rely on training for volunteer coordinators to "weed out people (APS doesn't) feel like create a comfortable environment."

She added that she didn't know of any concerns from riders about workers having a history of assault, although some volunteers have been assigned to conduct research or distribute fliers because they didn't

conform with the "structure and feel" of the organization.

APS Co-Director Elisabeth Jackson said many workers are from other states, requiring more money to screen workers and preventing the organization from conducting searches of Oregon criminal records for free.

"I want to emphasize that we're doing the best that we can to compensate for ... the fact that we're not able to do background checks," Wells said.

Wells said there is always the possibility that a worker could have a history of assault, although it is "highly improbable." She said even background checks wouldn't make the group "certain the problem would be alleviated."

Jackson agreed.

"We are confident; we're just trying to make it better," she said.

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Chess: Game represents icon of intellectualism

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"Everybody associates a good chess player with intelligence."

Ramey said studies show playing chess can improve academic performance, help reintegrate prisoners into society and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease in elderly people.

Ramey said the first reference to chess was recorded in fifth century Persia. The king said no ruler could effectively govern a kingdom without being a chess player. Chess was introduced to Europe through

Russia in the ninth and 10th centuries when Russian leaders adopted it as the royal game.

Ramey, who teaches chess at Chess-Ways in Eugene, described four main aspects to the study of chess: opening moves and sequences of moves; tactics and exchanges; strategy and long-range planning; and "endgame."

Chess games in the tournament were allowed to last up to four hours, with two hours per player monitored by clocks on the tables. Hamilton said during one of the

tournament's games, a player took 25 minutes to make a move.

"You reach a certain point in a chess game where you reach a complex position," Ramey said. "If you find the right move, it can set the tone of the rest of the game for you."

The UO Chess Club meets at 5 p.m. Fridays in the EMU Fishbowl. The ASUO-funded group offers instruction, friendly play and intercollegiate play, and it is open to all.

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