

"Best Meal for a Deal," 2nd Place, "Best Omelette," 2nd Place, "Best Breakfast," 2nd Place, "Best Vegetarian Fare," 2nd Place, "Register-Guard Reader Poll, 1987," "Best Breakfast," "In Town Magazine," 1995, "Top Ten Choice," "Oregon Daily Emerald," 1996, "Best Eatery Before 9 a.m.," "Comic News," "Best Dinner Under \$8," "Eugene Weekly," 1996, "One of a Kind," "Thompson's Out," "Gazette," 1998, "Best Under \$3," "Place to Take Visitors When You Pay," 1st Place, "Best Breakfast," 1st Place, "Best Sunday Brunch," 2nd Place, "Best," "Eugene Weekly," 1999, "Best Dinner Under \$12," 1st Place, "Best Lunch Under \$8," 1st Place, "Best Breakfast," 2nd Place, "Best Soup," 3rd Place, "Eugene Weekly," 2000, "Best Breakfast," "Best of Teen," "Register-Guard," Below, 2001, "Best Breakfast," 2nd Place, "Best," "Eugene Weekly," 2002, "Best Soup," 2nd Place, "Eugene Weekly," 2003, "Best," "Eugene Weekly," 2003.

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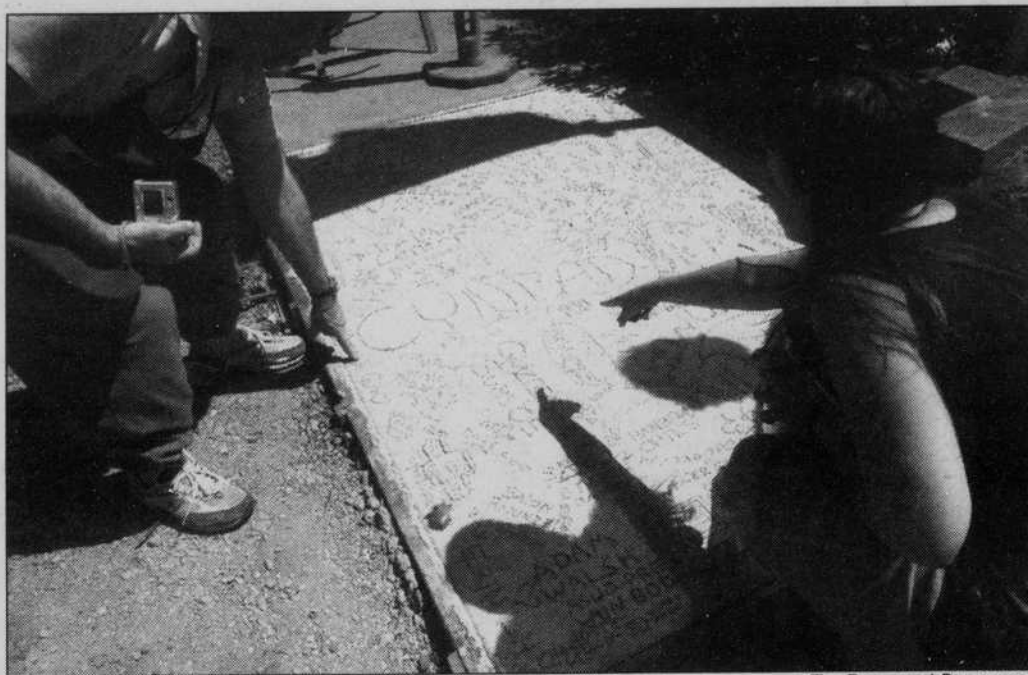
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Chairman Drix Rixmann and board member Marie Valle point at community pavement art Friday afternoon on 13th Avenue near Pearl Street.

TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

West University Neighbors bring 'soul' to community

The association's projects include reopening a park and incorporating art in the alley paving project

BY NICHOLAS WILBUR
NEWS REPORTER

An estimated 60 percent of West University neighborhood residents are students, according to West University Neighbors Chairman Drix Rixmann, and six of the nine association board members are students, including ASUO President Adam Walsh.

Active neighbors are currently "putting soul back in the neighborhood," Rixmann said, by involving the community in reopening a park, personalizing alleys and putting names and dates on newly-paved sidewalks.

"It's here, it's local, and people can really make a difference," Rixmann said. "We want to let (students) know that this is their neighborhood; for 40 years this is theirs. You're told your whole life 'don't talk to strangers,' but these are your neighbors and when we get together for these things, everybody really has a fun time."

WUN was started by 92-year resident Charlotte Lemon.

"She called us the Neighbors because we're not an association, we're neighbors," Rixmann said.

After several years without holding meetings or events, University students started the group up again in fall 2003.

"The board works well when we have sophisticated representation of students," WUN Chairwoman Deborah Healey said at a meeting on July 28.

City Councilor David Kelly, who represents West University neighborhood along with five others, also encouraged student involvement.

"It's a great way for neighbors to get to know each other and work together," Kelly said. "A larger percentage of residents are students, and that brings a lot of energy. But it also creates challenges for sustainability because students often come and go."

"Thinking back to my own days as a student, I wasn't just a part of the college, but I was part of the community. Getting involved in (neighborhood associations) can do that, and students can make a difference," Kelly said.

In a recent walk through parts of the West University neighborhood, Rixmann pointed to all the details of the area that he says usually go unnoticed. Old sidewalks are still engraved with street names and dates, ancient trees tower over entire blocks without much recognition and houses still stand from the early part of last century.

"There's even an old stable on Mill Alley," Rixmann said. "We found a horse shoe when they started paving this alley ... see, this place has soul!"

Rixmann sees himself as a sort of neighborhood representative and volunteer. He helps organize neighborhood events, he keeps sidewalks safe by trimming invading bushes and sometimes he picks up trash.

"Some days I pick up trash, some I don't, because, you know, you don't see empty cases of Keystone Light in the 'burbs," Rixmann said.

Recently, the biggest topic for WUN has been the negotiations to reopen West University Neighborhood Park, on 14th Avenue between Hilyard and Patterson streets, after it was closed down about 10 years ago because of high criminal activity. The main problem with the park is visibility. It is a dark "pocket park," deep enough for criminal activity to go unnoticed while also providing an alternative escape route for criminals through the alley at the back.

Bob and Leslie Quinney own the property on the corner of 14th Avenue and Hilyard Street and are looking to put up an apartment building in place of the white house that sits there now. At the last WUN meeting at the Glenwood Restaurant on July 28 the Bob Quinney proposed a land-swap where the corner of 14th Avenue and Hilyard Street would be traded for alley access at the back of the park. It will lose depth if the deal goes through, but it will increase visibility and eliminate many of the problems that West University residents and EPD Officer Randy Ellis are concerned about. The city currently charges park trespassers \$500 or up to 30 days in jail.

At the meeting, WUN board members voted on a draft to send to the City of Eugene that states, "The West University Neighbors Board supports the

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