

Celebration: A time to honor the departed

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shape of skulls or other bones.

On Día de los Muertos, families remember the departed by offering the deceased their favorite foods, drinks and other things they enjoyed in life.

"In Mexico, they actually go to the graves and set up the altar and celebrate at the graves of their loved ones," MEChA External Director Orlando Bravo said. "Since I can't go to the graves, this is a way for me to celebrate here."

Because Día de los Muertos falls so close to Halloween, it's interesting for people to see a different view of the afterlife during their celebrations, Internal Director of MEChA Juliana Guzmán said.

"It's a different perspective of the dead for people to see around Halloween," Guzmán said. "For us, death is living. Día de Los Muertos is a happy time to celebrate the lives of those who have passed. It isn't sad or scary."

MEChA's 25th-annual Día de los Muertos celebration starts at 6:25 p.m. today in the EMU Ballroom.

The Maude Kerns Gallery is also celebrating Día de los Muertos in Eugene. The gallery's 12th-annual Día de los Muertos exhibit features 23 local and national artists and includes elaborate altars, traditional and contemporary images of Día de los Muertos and an interactive altar where people can write their own remembrances.

The gallery is also presenting a lecture, "Death & Fiesta: The Celebration of Día de los Muertos," today at 7 p.m.. The lecture, which will cover how this tradition is celebrated in modern-day Mexico, is by folklorist and former Maude Kerns Gallery Día de los Muertos Curator Susan Dearborn Jackson.



NICOLE BARKER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Juliana Guzmán, internal director of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan at the University, discusses the meaning of Día de Los Muertos. MEChA's celebration will be held tonight in the EMU Ballroom.

The Maude Kerns Gallery is located at 1910 E. 15th Ave. The Día de los Muertos exhibit runs until Nov. 11.

Contact the people, culture and faith reporter at bmcclellanah@dailymerald.com

IN BRIEF

Senate seeks student input on punishing unruly fans

The student government Athletic Department Finance Committee and the Student Senate tonight will discuss "unclassy fan behavior" at University sporting events. The meeting will be held at 5 p.m. in 116 Esslinger.

Students may attend and give feedback on last week's ADFC proposal that the Student Senate punish "major and egregious" offenses at sporting events by revoking student ticket privileges. The Senate will also consider other punishments and courses of action at the meeting.

All enrolled students currently pay \$191 in incidental fees per term, per student, to pay for tickets to football and men's basketball games, as well as other services, such as bus services from Lane Transit District and use of the Student Recreation Center.

Last week Senators met to discuss the issue and could not agree on a course of action. Several Senators said they consider revoking tickets a harsh punishment for pre-paid privileges. Others argued that certain offenses, such as fights and throwing bottles, go against expectations outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Senators are holding tonight's meeting because they could not agree on a recommendation last week, and they are seeking student input.

The Senate will continue the debate today before submitting an official recommendation to University President Dave Frohnmayer.

— Nicholas Wilbur

Enrollment grows slightly at Oregon universities

PORTLAND — Enrollment increased at five of Oregon's seven public universities this fall.

Eastern Oregon University in La Grande posted an almost 6 percent jump, the fastest growth among the universities. Southern Oregon University in Ashland saw enrollment dip for the second year in a row. This year's 3.5 percent decline, however, was much less steep than last year's 6 percent drop.

Though most of the universities saw enrollment growth, the increases were much more modest than those of the mid-to-late 1990s.

Oregon universities added more than 18,000 students in the 10-year span from 1994 to 2003. Based on estimates this fall, the Oregon University System added roughly 1,100 students, an increase of less than 2 percent.

Portland State University, the state's largest school, saw its enrollment increase by 790 students — or 3 percent. The University of Oregon and Oregon State University each added 1 percent or less, but those schools are attempting to grow at a slow pace.

Western Oregon University in Monmouth grew 2 percent, in contrast to 2004 when enrollment dropped 5 percent. Enrollment at Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls was flat, with about 3,350 students.

The slower growth in recent years has coincided with double-digit percentage tuition increases from 2002 through 2004 and an economic downturn.

This fall, tuition and mandatory fees rose, on average, by 4 percent. The Legislature also provided money for all eligible low-income public university students to receive grants to help pay tuition, up from 70 percent last year.

Veteran lawmaker won't seek another term

SALEM — Rep. Bob Ackerman, D-Eugene, announced that he is retiring from office at the end of his current term.

Ackerman, 68, also dismissed speculation that he would run for the

Senate district that includes his north Eugene district, a seat that could open if Sen. Vicki Walker, D-Eugene, challenges Gov. Ted Kulongoski in next year's primary.

Ackerman was first elected to the House in 2000. An attorney, Ackerman served all three of his sessions on the Judiciary Committee, as well as on other panels.

He said his decision to retire was partly based on his self-imposed limit of three House terms. Ackerman said the year-round work load that extends from session to interim work to campaigning also led to his decision.

"It's a question of what you want to do with the rest of your life, what you'd like to do with your family," Ackerman told the Register-Guard.

Ackerman said the highlight of his legislative career was being chosen by the speaker of a Republican-controlled House to chair the Civil Law Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, an unusual assignment for a member of the minority party.

"Having received that appointment from across the aisle from a Republican speaker spoke to my bipartisan approach," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Kate Brown, who is in charge of her chamber's Democratic campaigns, said Ackerman would have made a strong Senate candidate, but she was confident the seat will remain in Democratic hands if Walker opposes Kulongoski.

Democrats control the Senate, but Republicans are attempting to take seats they view as vulnerable, including Walker's.

"There are other folks we're talking to," Brown said. "We're not ready to name names."

Republican Jim Torrey, the former mayor of Eugene, is the only candidate filed in Senate District 7.

No Republicans have entered the race for Ackerman's House District 13.

Ackerman said he supports Nancy Nathanson, a former Eugene city councilwoman and mayoral candidate.

Her campaign manager, Chris Matson, said Nathanson, a Democrat, planned to file as a candidate next week.

Former Science teacher gets five years in prison

EUGENE — A high school science teacher who pleaded guilty to sexually abusing two former students was sentenced to five years in prison.

Dustin Beck, 32, who taught at Mohawk High School in Marcola, told Lane County Judge Doug Mitchell on Monday that he intends to spend the rest of his life proving he has a good heart.

Beck said he regretted the pain caused by his "foolishness."

Mitchell scoffed at Beck's use of the word.

"The only hope you have will be for you to understand and accept what you did was criminal — not a mistake, not bad judgment," the judge said. "You need to take responsibility."

Beck, who also coached soccer and was a youth pastor, was sentenced to four years and four months in state prison, followed by eight months in the Lane County Jail. He will also undergo sex-offender treatment.

Abuse occurred between 2000 and 2004, according to court documents.

The father of one victim said Beck didn't just abuse the girls. Beck, he said, abused his community, his school, his teams, and his congregation.

"This was cold and calculated," he told the judge.

The victims, standing side by side, told Beck they are pleased to see him headed to prison.

One said she felt humiliated, embarrassed, ashamed and disappointed in herself at falling victim. She said it was tough to report the crimes because of Beck's popularity.

—The Associated Press

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