

IN BRIEF

Judge sides with Starbucks in name dispute

ASTORIA, Ore. — A federal judge says the name "Sambuck's" tacked above a hole-in-the-wall coffee shop is too similar to coffee giant Starbucks and must be changed.

Owner Sam Buck opened the shop in 2000, naming it after herself.

She said Thursday that she had few details of a ruling by U.S. District Judge Ancer Haggerty of Portland. She faces hundreds of thousands of dollars in lawyers' fees.

"The judge said I willfully infringed on (Starbucks') trademark, that I diluted their trademark," she said.

She was faced with erasing all traces of the name, from coffee cups to the sign outside to business cards.

"You're throwing away thousands of dollars worth of stuff," Buck said, "and you're left paying thousands of dollars more to have new things made."

She opened the shop in 2000, before Astoria had a Starbucks, and got a cease-and-desist letter from the Seattle-based company in March of 2002.

Starbucks, which licenses and operates more than 8,000 stores

worldwide, offered Buck \$500 to drop the name.

She refused, and Starbucks sued. She says she doubts people have trouble distinguishing her 10-foot-wide shop from a Starbucks, and that her business logo is not easily confused with that of Starbucks.

Starbucks has since opened a store in Astoria a mile east, in a Safeway building.

Buck said she found out Tuesday night that she had lost.

Starbucks spokeswoman Lara Wyss said the company is "pleased with the court's decision."

"While it is always Starbucks' preference and desire to resolve disputes of this nature informally ... we will seek the assistance of the courts to protect our trademark when we are unable to resolve the matter through alternate means," Wyss wrote in an e-mail.

Buck says legal costs will be a stretch but she doubts she will close.

"It keeps your motivation going," she said. "I think it will be OK."

Community support has given her added incentive.

"We're standing up for small business because corporate America is squeezing out the small businesses," Buck said. "It's real and it's going to happen if we don't do something."

—The Associated Press

Outgoing WUN chairman receives award for service

Board members of West University Neighbors discuss upcoming meeting

BY CHRIS HAGAN
NEWS REPORTER

Drix Rixmann, a West University Neighbors board member, received an honor from the city of Eugene at the neighborhood association's meeting last night for his two years of service as the organization's chair.

Neighborhood Services gave Rixmann a Certificate of Appreciation, an award for outgoing neighborhood association leaders. Steve Norris, neighborhood liaison for the city, presented Rixmann with the framed certificate, signed by Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy.

"The city really supports volunteers," Norris said after the meeting, "and we like to recognize them."

The award made the normally loose-tongued Rixmann speechless.

"I was just overwhelmed," Rixmann said. "Just to have all of this validated is great."

After the presentation, current WUN chairman and ASUO President Adam Walsh attempted to discuss adding ground rules to streamline the normally unstructured WUN meetings.

Walsh suggested adding a speaker's queue and a one-minute time limit on comments, ideas he said he got from attending a recent Far West Neighborhood Association meeting.

"It gives the meeting structure and flow," Walsh said. "It creates an environment where everyone feels they can be heard."

But community activist Zachary Vishanoff thought adding structure to the meetings would stifle discussion.

"If you have to wait 20 minutes to respond to someone, it's hard to have a back-and-forth," Vishanoff said.

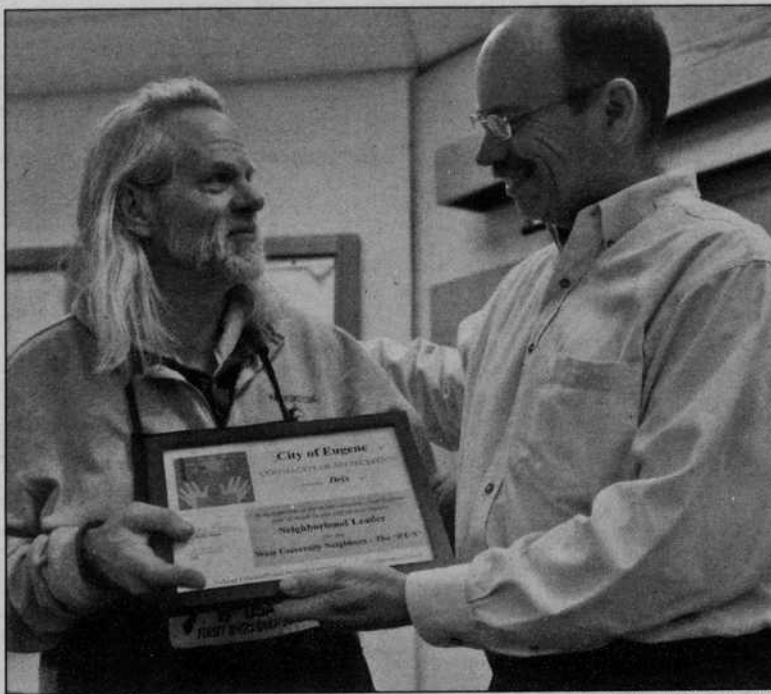
When board members continued to support the idea of a queue, Vishanoff became agitated and began shouting.

"Vote me banned," Vishanoff said. "It will show what a real conspiracy this is."

The WUN members refused to ban him, reminding him they were a public group and open to any neighborhood residents.

"This is a great argument for structure," Norris said. "This is turning into a shouting match between you and nobody else."

Vishanoff left the meeting after the board decided to follow the new



ZANE RITT | PHOTOGRAPHER

Neighborhood liaison Steve Norris presents a certificate of appreciation from the city of Eugene to Drix Rixmann at the West University Neighbors meeting.

rules for the night's meeting.

The board then turned its attention to future meeting agendas.

It laid out the topics and speakers they would like during the next six months. Possible meetings included a city night in March that would feature the mayor and police chief and a candidate forum in April for the open Ward 3 city council seat.

"The city really supports volunteers ... And we like to recognize them."

STEVE NORRIS | Neighborhood liaison

The WUN is also considering inviting local landlords to the February meeting to discuss housing issues with neighborhood residents.

WUN secretary Marie Valle said a housing meeting could help educate residents about the city's new renters code.

"If you've just moved here, you may not know we have this system," Valle said.

The group also discussed changing its charter in order to allow it to meet on days other than first Thursday of the month, as is required in the charter.

"It's archaic," Norris said. "We'd be behind you if you wanted to say just meet regularly."

The group needs at least 20 people to vote officially, and with only four people present, the group

will discuss the matter further at later meeting.

With the low turnout, something Walsh expected because of Dead Week, the focus turned to how the group could bring in more people.

A media committee, made up of Rixmann and board members Ben Fousek and David Wallace, was created to organize mailings and newsletters for the group. The neighborhood has 3,551 address, making the media effort difficult for the small group.

"I know there's an efficient way to put a flier on every apartment complex in the neighborhood," Fousek said. "If we can get lots of people here and have a good, lively meeting, we'll be more successful."

Walsh agreed but suggested the group use mailings instead of flyers.

"One thing about being able to mail it is that everyone gets it," Walsh said. "We always get a bigger turnout for a mailing."

Fousek is also spearheading the creation of a WUN Web site to increase awareness of the group.

"If we just put a lot of data in one place, 95 percent of the people in this neighborhood have access to the Internet," Fousek said.

The WUN's next meeting will be Jan. 12, where members plan to discuss a possible neighborhood watch program and further discuss changes to the group's charter.

Contact the city, state politics reporter at chagan@dailyemerald.com

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