

Get Lit (Not Bit)

Enjoy the other parades by riding some bikes and admiring some animals ♦ BY KATIE CORNELL

Alh, 'tis the season that Eugeneans have anticipated: Celebration time! Many festive people will be enjoying themselves with the music, food and friends that the weekend-long party offers. Adding to the excitement, newcomers and veterans alike will have some interesting alternatives to the big Celebration Parade. The first-ever Bike Lights Parade, put on by the Eugene Bicycle Coalition (EBC), as well as the 10th annual Pet Parade, may get people's blood flowing with some exercise and/or a good laugh as pets strut their stuff down the street.

This is the first year for the Bike Lights Parade; we'll see if it can hold a candle to the occasional Whiteaker bike parades.

"I wanted to see this ride happen and the city has really helped us out to get it going," says Bob Ransom, the man responsible for Bike Lights. Ransom, who moved to Eugene a year and a half ago, quickly became involved with the biking community in Eugene. Originally from New York, Ransom has relied on public transportation and biking for most of his life. Ransom joined the EBC and began to work on a special project: promoting bike light safety.

Ransom and the EBC received a \$4,900 grant from the Community Cycling Center and ODOT last winter, which included 400 sets of lights that they want to distribute to people who can't usually afford them. In

order to do that, Ransom suggested a voucher system that would allow bicyclists to register for theft protection and receive free bike lights at police sub-stations. The program would be known as the "Fix It" ticket, and the Eugene Police Department is trying to implement it.

Ransom also designed bike safety brochures to hand out throughout the community — and he discovered a great opportunity: He realized the grant includes a commitment to hold a community bike ride.

"I would love to see this become an annual event," Ransom says. He knew of successful nighttime rides in Portland and Houston, and the EBC agreed it would be a great activity for the Eugene community as well. The EBC originally planned to hold the event earlier in the summer but decided to postpone it to promote it and get more people involved. "We want to bring recognition to the idea of having well-lit bicycles at night," Ransom explains. "It is also more feasible for families



ity bike goodies at his "Get Lit" booth.

But if biking is not your thing, maybe watching some sassy pets do their thang is. The decade-old Pet Parade, sponsored by the Bearen Foundation, begins at 1:30 pm on Sunday, Sept. 9, on 8th Avenue and ends on Park West. There will be plenty to do, including a fashion show, photo opportunities and judging on categories such as "Best Costume," "Pet/Owner Look-a-Like," "Best Group Presentation," "Best Junior Entry" and, *obviously*, "Most Talented."

The Bearen Foundation began in 2000 when founder Megan Bendtzen's cat, Bearen, experienced acute kidney failure and had to receive treatment at UC Davis. Bendtzen, a Eugene resident, began to raise money back at home to pay for Bearen's kidney transplant. Since then, the organization assists people who cannot financially support their ailing pets. "Our primary focus is to help pay the vet bills of responsible owners that can't afford it. [The Pet Parade] is a great time to promote who we are and to just have fun," says Vice President Jenette Kane, who has been actively involved in the Pet Parade since 2000.

Kane is excited for the Pet Parade, but she's also happy to be around to hang out with friends and eat some good food.

"I really like the theme [of Lighten Up!] this year," she says. "It says a lot, you know? I think sometimes people take themselves too seriously. It's just a great time to remember to have fun."

For more information on the Eugene Bicycle Coalition, visit www.efn.org/~bicycle and for more information on the Bearen Foundation, visit www.bearenfoundation.org ♦

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