

# Beer Lake drained for bridge work

## *Campus wonders what's at bottom*

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LOCAL NEWS EDITOR

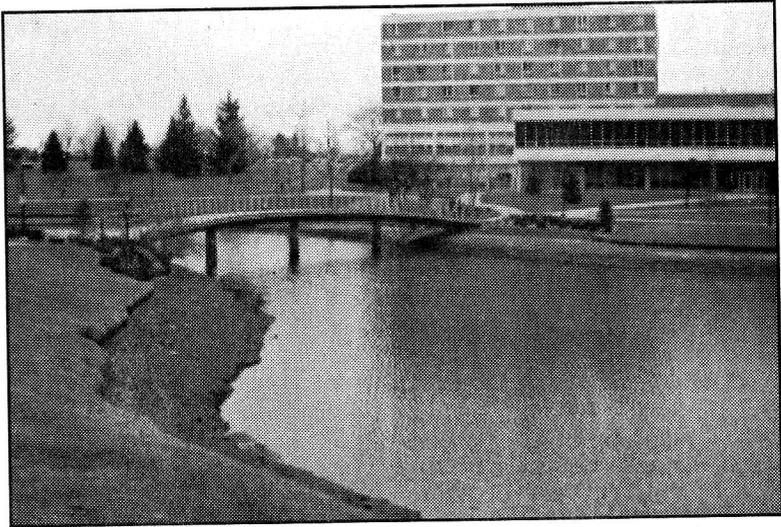
Beer Lake's muddy shoreline grew considerably last week when Campus Facilities and Operations drained two-and-half million gallons of water.

The drainage was necessary so structural engineers could inspect the bridge that connects Vandenberg Hall with the rest of campus.

University Engineer Simon Ren said the partial drain is only temporary, but in June the entire lake will be emptied as major bridge repairs and extensive landscape work is completed.

"We're planning on repairing the pedestrian bridge this summer," he said. "The deterioration is starting to accelerate."

According to Ren, the steel



Dan McDuffee/The Oakland Post

**DRAINED:** 2.5 million gallons of water was drained from Beer Lake.

poles that make up the bridge's structural framework are beginning to rust through the cement, causing pieces to flake off.

Last year, Campus Facilities and Operations commissioned

the engineering firm McClurg & Associates to inspect the bridge. The engineers deemed it structurally safe but found framework situation could cause serious

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trouble in the future.

"We're fixing it before it gets to that point," Ren said.

He said since the bridge's 1967 construction, the only repairs to it have included spot cement patching, lighting replacements and the annual application of a non-skid surface on the walkway.

"No real maintenance has been done since it was built ... We haven't done any major work on the bridge and the lake itself."

Money for the \$232,000 project will come out of the facilities fund, and the department plans on asking the BOT for authorization before the end of this school year.

Many students noticed Beer Lake's water level drop but were unaware the bridge was in need of repair.

"I thought they were just looking for something at the bottom," said Jennifer McGreevy, freshman, political science.

Maria Debiaggi, junior, communication, would like to see the uni-

versity explore other options for the land behind Vandenberg.

"I think the lake itself is totally useless," she said. "Is it really a lake? I've seen bathtubs bigger than that."

Debiaggi suggested it would be more practical for OU to drain the lake and convert the land into a recreational area for students.

"Wouldn't it be nicer if it was a park area where kids from the dorms could barbecue?" she said.

According to Ren, Beer Lake was last drained more than 30 years ago - an event he witnessed firsthand as a student.

"In '68, as a pre-Halloween prank, it was drained by the Van Wagnor students," he said.

Ren added that last week's drain revealed "quite a few signs," and he expects Beer Lake's bottom to yield even more surprises.

"I know there's at least one bowling ball, because I saw it roll down the hill," he joked.