

# Surface & Symbol

Thursday, January 8, 1976



These chairs won't be empty for long, as the WOW Hall now becomes the Community Center for the Performing Arts.

Photo by John Johns

## Community Center for the Performing Arts: *'A living expression of all the artists in the community'*

When you call up the WOW Hall now there's a good chance the answering voice will say, "Community Center for the Performing Arts, may I help you?"

It was just last month that the Committee to Secure a Westside Community Center for the Performing Arts was involved in a fight against time to save the WOW Hall, at 291 W. Eighth Ave., from being sold to commercial interests. Due largely to the surge of energy created by the four solid days of entertainment Wowathon, the committee raised the \$10,000 down payment needed to purchase the Hall, just one day before the Dec. 15 deadline.

"We've really been negligent in thanking the folks who contributed during the Wowathon," says Steve Cohen, temporary manager of the center. He added, "The only large sums we received were \$1000 from the Renaissance Faire and \$1500 from the Saturday Market. We also got \$1000 through the restaurant downstairs, but the other \$6500 was mainly nickels and dimes out of people's pockets."

Cohen likes to talk about what he refers to as "redefining the space" at the WOW Hall. "To a lot of people the WOW Hall means throwing the doors open every Friday and Saturday nights and having a bunch of dope-crazed hippies running around. I see the WOW Hall as becoming a living expression of all the artists in the community and not being limited to just the performing arts. We want to have all different art forms going on here from architects working on the building to cooks in the kitchen downstairs to gardeners outside."

Committee member Stuart Snyder remarked that a man from the Eugene Boy's Club had been in earlier to discuss renting the center for a pancake breakfast. "I

think that's great," Snyder said. "The more the Hall can be opened to the wider community, I think the better."

The new year was started out right at the center with a highly successful New Year's Eve gig which netted close to \$800. This facilitated making the monthly payment on Jan. 1 of \$952. \$1200 is estimated as the total monthly expenses including taxes and insurances.

There are many plans to keep people coming into the community center and to help it meet financial commitments. Every Wednesday night the Community Center Film Society will show double features for 95 cents. "Yellow Submarine" and Disney Cartoons are scheduled for Jan. 14. Following Wednesdays will showcase films by such directors as Frank Capra and

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By MICHAEL KESTEN

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Alfred Hitchcock. Starting Jan. 21 a Dick Tracy vs. Crime Inc. serial will be shown each week along with the double feature.

There will be children's shows on Saturday mornings which will include mime, films, and dance. Monday night is community dance night when members of the Eugene Dance Collective lend their talents to anyone who comes in. Saturday night, Jan. 10, Maija, billed as a jazz-rock group, will make its final farewell performance at the center.

Eventually some kind of restaurant will occupy the kitchen space downstairs, but nothing is definite yet.

"We will rent out the Hall on a flat fee, produce

shows, or co-produce shows," says Cohen. He described rental fees as \$50 for Sunday through Thursday nights and \$75 for Friday and Saturday nights.

Right now there's a lot of work to be done on the hall to create the community center which the committee envisions. Cohen laid it out: "We need help in terms of everything. We need all sorts of energy from renovation to furniture to plants. We need artists to do posters and design work."

Above the funds raised by the Wowathon was a loan given by the Hoedads Co-op for just under \$5000. \$1500 of this is earmarked for the salary of a permanent managerial staff at \$300 a month. Those interested in the manager job should meet at the center at 5:30 p.m. next Sunday, Jan. 11, just prior to the committee's general meeting at 7:30 p.m.

A contest is being held to obtain a descriptive logo for the center to be used on official letterheads and publicity concerning center activities. Any questions about criteria for the logo should be directed to Jon Pincus, chair of the committee, at 345-5237. Designs should be submitted to Steve Cohen at the center by noon Jan. 11. An open judging will be held that same day at 4 p.m. at the center.

No feeling is shown at the center that the energy created by the Wowathon may lapse and leave a few die-hards with a big empty building. Steve Cohen sees the WOW Hall as just the beginning base of a community center that will eventually need other buildings to contain all its activities. Jon Pincus says, "We're going to create an atmosphere here that will induce people to keep coming in and take part in the activities presented."