

Surface and Symbol

The Emerald's weekly art and entertainment supplement

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Jenifer Blumberg's last trip

Backstage with the EMU Cultural Forum

Ed. Note — Jennifer Blumberg, former editor of Surface and Symbol, resigned her position at the end of last term. She wrote the following story as a parting gift.

The world of show biz — rubbing elbows with the celebrities, setting up interviews for McCoy Tyner, driving out to the airport to pick up George Carlin, running through a sound check with Chuck Mangione.

Sound like a soft job?

Ah, but there is more to the role of sponsoring a performance than working with the star(s) of the show.

A lot more.

Just ask Cultural Forum members Sue or Garret or Jim, Frank or Rick. But don't ask them a week before a particular performance or for about two days afterward (post-performance letdown — a time for unwinding, recovering and either rejoicing or trying to figure out why that particular group or person did not sell tickets.)

They'll tell you about the phone calls that were placed, the contracts that were read and re-read and finally signed, the hassles that were endured. And the disappointment of a last-minute cancellation is an ever-present possibility.

Cultural Forum is a division of the EMU Program Office, and is divided into five categories: Contemporary Issues, Folk Music and Jazz, Film and Literature, Popular Music and Performing Arts.

The office is usually hopping. Walk into the Suite 2 of the EMU on a day in the middle of a particularly heavily-programmed week and:

The first face you'll most likely encounter

is the smiling one belonging to Shelby Ferguson, who is more than a secretary, and more than the "administrative assistant" her title says she is. Shelby is the one who takes care of forgotten details, gives moral support and contributes the enthusiasm that ties the office together.

At the desk next to Shelby's is Ned Shaffer, whose job title is Program Consultant. Ned will probably be munching on granola or a whole wheat bread sandwich, and offering support or advice (if it's asked for) to whomever he is taking to. Ned offers the invaluable attribute of experience. Having held his position for three years, Ned knows the ropes. But you'll never find him being heavy-handed or even attempting to control — he lets the students run the show, for he has faith in their abilities and their potential to learn by doing.

Bits of conversation overheard in Program office:

"Shelby, are the posters back from the printer's yet?"

"Double Tee is on line two, Jim. They want you to go 90-10 on a concert."

"I can't read the tiny type in this contract!"

"That promoter is driving me nuts!"

"Shelby, is the Ballroom available on the 9th?"

"Sue, that folk group from Seattle you wanted is interested."

"Shelby, have the films from Warner Bros. arrived yet?"

"Ned, how do I get ahold of this guy's booking agent?"

Since it is up to the heads of the individual

Cultural Forum divisions to make the final decision on who University of Oregon students will bring to campus during the school year, you might like to know a little bit about who these persons are, and what they've done so far.

RICK WORTHINGTON, Contemporary Issues — Rick is working toward his Ph.D. in political science, and brought Buckminster Fuller and Stanley Aronowitz, among others, to campus this school year. Rick's job is to invite speakers in the field of politics, government, social issues, international and human relations and education. There is usually no admission charged to hear these guest lecturers.

SUE NORDQUIST, Folk Music and Jazz — Sue is a junior in history and Italian. Her "biggie" of the year is the Willamette Valley Folk Festival, which is coming up soon — May 20, 21 and 22. Sue helped put on the successful Festival last year, and has been working on this year's Festival for months.

GARRETT SMITH, Film and Literature — Garrett is a GTF in the broadcasting department, and is working towards his master's degree. Besides scheduling and ordering the Cultural Forum Films each term, Garrett brought such notables to campus as W. Eugene Smith, Linwood Dunn, and independent filmmakers Lenny Lipton and John Teton.

JIM REINKING, Popular Concerts — Jim is a senior in music, specializing in percussion instruments. This is his second year in the position of planning popular concerts. Jim is responsible for bringing a lot of fine jazz musicians (Chuck Mangione, Stanley

Turrentine) as well as Janis Ian and Dan Fogelberg.

FRANK GELTNER, Performing Arts — Frank is getting his doctorate in theatre, and is a GTF in the department. Frank has brought such varied and distinguished talent as the Human Dancing Company, George Carlin, the Theatre of the Open Eye and the Elizabethan Trio. The performing arts division covers the visual arts, dance, theatre and art exhibitions.

Cultural Forum is funded by student money. Any profit made by a performance or production goes back into bringing more talent of that kind.

The fact that students working for Cultural Forum do not get paid for their work comes as a surprise to many persons, especially after seeing how many hours required by the jobs. But each person has an expertise and an interest in the area he or she is working in, and the hard work just sort of follows naturally.

The program office is a student service, and your suggestions are welcome. If there is a certain act or group you'd like to see here, talk to someone in the office about it. The next performance you see may be your own. And if you belong to an organization interested in sponsoring a film, the film catalogs in Program Office are available for you to look through.

If any of the Cultural Forum positions appeal to you, and you plan on having a lot of time and energy next year, you might pick up an application for next year's positions in EMU Suite 2. The world of tinsel and glitter — and hard work — could be waiting for you.