

Commission stages civic center hearing

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

The Eugene Civic Center Commission took the first step Monday night in compiling information on the proposed civic complex in the first of several public hearings to determine the type of facility most needed by the Eugene and Lane County area.

All but one of the 14-member commission were present for more than two hours of testimony from speakers with interests ranging from a performing hall for symphonic orchestras to a convention center and hotel complex. Nearly 15 civic and regional groups were represented, including the University's Department of Athletics and School of Music.

The commission, which held its first meeting July 19, called the public hearing to "build a record," according to chairman Les Anderson. The hearings were not designed to set possible locations or costs of a civic center project, but

to establish a conceptual design through public testimony, he said.

From the 20-plus speakers, the commission received descriptions of "dream" auditoriums, suggestions for seating capacity and instructions on how to make the complex pay for itself.

Reg Tonry, representing the Eugene Symphony, spoke specifically to the idea of a performing arts theater by describing the type of center his organization would most like to see constructed. Painting a picture of an auditorium for the commission, Tonry suggested that the new theater be able to seat at least 2,200 people. "I've had to turn down bookings because the theater was too small."

Citing the "strangulation" of the Eugene Symphony because of cramped concert halls, Joyce McHolick, another symphony representative, pointed out that a large auditorium would solve several financial problems for the or-

chestra. The present revenue from ticket sales for concerts held in the University's 500-seat Beall Hall, she said, is barely meeting 50 per cent of the symphony's needs.

Pierre Van Rysselberghe, a representative of the Eugene University Music Association (EUMA), explained that musical performances have outgrown MacArthur Court and it is past time for a new performing arts center. But, Van Rysselberghe said, because of EUMA's large membership, a concert hall seating more than 4,000 people would be more suitable.

Randi Douglas, of the Oregon Repertoire Theater Company, explained that a center seating more than 600 would be forced to "ship in theater companies" to stay economically afloat. Douglas, who was interested in philosophical aspects of establishing a large performing arts center, pointed out that it would be best to keep the theater small and employ local talent.

"Eugene and Springfield are good about supporting local theater groups," she said. "Witness the University of Oregon and Lane Community College's theater groups and how well they are received." Douglas pointed to the Shakespearean Theater in Ashland as an example of what a good performing arts center utilizing local talent can do for a city's

economy. States surrounding Oregon have resident theater groups, but Oregon has none, she said.

A former chairman of the Lane County Auditorium Association (LCAA), Catherine Lauris, called the question of seating capacity irrelevant and pointed out that at present there is no adequate performing arts hall in Eugene. "Until we recognize the cultural arts in our area, we shall be only a provincial town in spirit, no matter how large we grow in numbers," she said.

Explaining that LCAA has already paid thousands of dollars for studies on crucial parts of the proposed civic center, Lauris said that the present commission shouldn't "re-invent the wheel," but should build on what has already been completed.

Paying for the center concerned David Weinkauff, a Eugene resident, who said the commission should consider including a hotel-convention complex in the center proposal to offset financial losses due to the center's underuse. Conventioneering is important, he said, and the commission should look at the universal proposal and then provide the specifics.

"What are you going to do, build a hall and tax the people, then keep taxing them because theater groups and the symphony can't fill

it? They won't buy it," Weinkauff said.

Tax base problems could be alleviated, he said, if the civic center were something every area citizen could use and enjoy. "I think people who vote no on it do so because they think their tax dollars are going for something they can't get involved with," Weinkauff explained.

John Caine, director of the University Men's Intercollegiate Athletic department, explained that it was very important to plan a way to pay for the civic center. "The idea is to book it," he said. "That means making it flexible to meet the needs and interests of a multi-constituency."

Peter Murphy, an LCAA member, agreed with Caine and pointed to Portland's Memorial Coliseum as proof that a three-phase auditorium, performing arts center and sports complex has advantages over narrower proposals.

Lee Bishop, representing a patron group of theater goers, explained that to make a civic center feasible for Eugene, it would be necessary to establish an economic base throughout the entire state.

"By buying tickets to other performances in the area," Bishop explained, "the people felt they were underwriting a new and larger performing arts auditorium."

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UO STUDENTS HALF-PRICE

Women publish own poetry

By MARY FORAN
Of the Emerald

Creativity and initiative are alive and well — and the Villard Street Poets have both.

Who are the Villard Street Poets? They're a group of 11 women writers who came together for a spring Search course taught by Phyllis Kerns, and who are now all published poets.

Joan Aschim, Candy Cooper, Kathy Craft, Mindy Fradkin, Cy Harrod, Phyllis Kerns, Jane Leighton, Lois McClellan, Lisa McNary, Judy McWhorter, and Mari O'Rourke, collectively "wrote, edited, designed, pasted up, produced, folded, collated, stapled, published and distributed" their

own book of poetry, called "With Her Own Wings." The title is from the motto of our Oregon Territory, "Alis Volat Propriis" — She Flies With Her Own Wings — and symbolizes the do-it-yourself spirit of this group of women writers.

According to one of the poets, Mari O'Rourke, the idea to create their own book "just kind of grew. The Search class was the beginning resource, but it had to grow out of the initiative of the group."

The Search class was seen as an alternative to the regular University poetry writing classes which can be "oppressive" to the struggling woman writer whose topics and style may not conform to the "male-oriented literary tradition."

The women's writing group gave support as well as criticism to the writers with a minimum of supervision, following the precepts in Peter Elbow's "Writing Without Teachers."

The criteria were simple: intelligibility, clarity of expression, and the ability to evoke empathy from the reader. Each poet selected her own best effort for publication. The result is a fresh and exciting book of poetry that speaks for the Woman's Experience, yet which is easily appreciated by any age, sex or philosophic orientation.

Some consider self-publication a kind of "vanity press", but there is a long history of famous writers, especially women writers, who found it necessary to publish their own work simply because the publishing industry is often more concerned with profit than with art. Small presses and self-publication are therefore the only alternatives for the as-yet undiscovered artist. "We won't be making a profit," said Mari O'Rourke. "No," added Judy McWhorter, "But there is the satisfaction of seeing someone react to what I've written. I've whole files of things I've written that nobody ever sees."

"With Her Own Wings" is written by women from 19 to 54 whose majors range from architecture to psychology, yet their poetry forms "echoes of common experience." Judy McWhorter says, "We're not radical feminists or men-haters. So we may be able to communicate and make a bridge to all people."

"With Her Own Wings" is now available at Book and Tea at \$1.25 per copy and it will soon be placed in the Oregon Collection in the University Library. For more information on self-publication or on the group itself, write % The Villard Street Poets, P.O. Box 3020 University Station, Eugene, Or. 97403. New writers and energy is welcome. As Cy Harrod says in one of her poems, "I Am A Poet, So What If It's Pretentious."



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