

I scream ice cream!
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The Friday Edition

The weekly arts & entertainment newsmagazine



The Cultural Forum's anonymous nine

It's hard not to notice what they do. Throughout the year, they have brought to campus the weekly beer gardens and films. The Clash, Reverend Chumleigh, the Aperture Photo Gallery, the annual Willamette Valley Folk Festival, Hunter Thompson, jazz gigs, the Holiday Crafts Fair and many other diversions. And they do it with consistent quality and variety.

Yet, paradoxically, they work in virtual anonymity.

They are the nine volunteer student coordinators of the EMU Cultural Forum who sponsor and promote educational and entertainment programs for the University community.

With help and advice from Frank Geltner, Jan Warren and Sheila Nice of the EMU Program Consulting Office, the coordinators plan events in seven areas, which include contemporary issues, film/video, heritage music, performing arts, popular/jazz concerts, visual arts and the program committee. This past year the coordinators have

Story by David Carlson

done their work on a \$67,884 budget; money that comes from Incidental Fees — the \$56 fee that students pay with tuition every term.

Since the Cultural Forum is a non-profit organization, all income from programs is kicked back into more programming, University Program Consultant Geltner says. Because of this, Cultural Forum members collectively handle huge sums of money. For instance in 1982-83, over \$250,000 in income and near that in expenses passed through the Cultural Forum's books.

This monetary responsibility is only the beginning of a Cultural Forum's coordinator's work. Tim Schafbuch, this year's popular and jazz concert coordinator, finds his job challenging in many ways. "I do everything from contacting agents and advertising, to meeting bands at the airport and partying with the band after the show," he says.

With such varied demands, Geltner says potential Cultural Forum members are

carefully screened through an extensive application and interview process every April. The positions are coveted by students and competition for them is keen — even though the jobs don't pay.

Why are these positions so desirable even though there is no pay, little recognition and a heavy time commitment?

Schafbuch, who works as much as six hours a day for the Cultural Forum and was responsible for luring The Clash to the University this week, says he does it because "it's a lot of fun," and because of the professional experience he gains.

"It's a hardcore business environment where I get to talk to professionals in New York, L.A. and Portland...it's a rare opportunity," he says, adding that handling money is a big part of what he does; Schafbuch was responsible for the \$30,000 in expenses involved in The Clash agreement.

Schafbuch says he hopes to turn his Cultural Forum experience into a career in the entertainment business as others before him have done; former Cultural Forum member Shane Tappendorf is now the chief promoter for Double Tee promotions in Portland.

Professional considerations aside, contemporary issues coordinator Wendy Stoltz says she works for the Cultural Forum "to experience camaraderie and for personal satisfaction." The \$11,500 budget that she receives from Incidental Fee allocation is the largest of the seven Forum areas.

Stoltz, an international studies major, says she has tried to bring an international perspective to her area. With programs such as Eyewitness to War, featuring journalists covering Afghanistan, Ireland and Cambodia, and with speakers such as Irish nationalist Bernadette Devlin McCloskey, Stoltz has achieved just that.

Not all her Cultural Forum experiences were on a serious note, however, as Stoltz recently discovered when she sponsored gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson of "bad craziness" fame.

"His agent told me I'm supposed to kick him under the table if he starts rambling," she said. Through his agent, Thompson also requested that he have two bottles of Wild

Turkey on stage and a desire not to have dinner with men; he wanted big-busted women, says Stoltz.

Stoltz, like all Cultural Forum members, has almost complete control over the programs she brings to the University. While some people criticize this policy and say the Cultural Forum risks not meeting the desires of the University community, Stoltz says that personally she tries to achieve a balance.

"You bring in your own personal interests, plus you're in tune with the interests of the wider student body," she says.

John Nafsinger, the film and video coordinator for the last two years, agrees.

"I have a good feel for the student population and try to show a wide variety of films such as shopping mall (popular) films, art films, classics and foreign films," he says.

Nafsinger says an interest in experimental films inspired him to make a policy of showing short films before the feature. "I feel it's an obligation to bring abstract experimental short films. I love to hear people boo and hiss when they don't understand them," he says.

Perhaps a lack of understanding at Friday night films is due to overindulgence at the weekly beer gardens. Tim Kelley, along with Lori Salzarulo and Craig Baker, make up the Cultural Forum program committee, which co-sponsors the Friday gardens with the EMU Food Services.

Kelley, who books the beer garden entertainment, says he tried this year to change the format to more of a concert atmosphere.

"Most people go to socialize, but I have more interest in the music part of it. I tried to bring bigger ideas to it, but Food Services wants low-key background music instead of a concert," he says.

Dealing with headaches and conflicts like these is the norm for the Cultural Forum, whose other members include heritage music coordinator Jamie McKillop, performing arts coordinator Mark McCrary, and visual arts coordinator Carol Ten Eyck. Usually though, the coordinators' work involves more enthusiasm than problems. "You worry about your program all the time," says Kelley. "It's your little baby."