

Book attempts new strategy

By Mary Lichtenwalner
Of the Emerald

The University yearbook made a comeback this year as an independent organization, no longer receiving funding from the University. And although the creative plans for the book may have been strong, the book stood on weak financial legs until a decision was reached in November.

The decision involved separating those handling the production of the book from those taking care of marketing. Editor Sigrid Wright says.

This division allows Jim Bellomo, a sales representative for the yearbook company Josten's Inc., and marketing manager Leslie Vroman to focus on successful marketing strategies, Wright says.

New marketing plans are helping the book to come back after five years of absence as a possible national award winner, says Bellomo.

"It will easily be the best book in the Pac-10," Bellomo says.

Editors of the book bring much experience to the new independent publication. Bellomo says. Wright is a former editor of South Eugene High School's yearbook, which Bellomo says was the best in the state.

The new book, "The Oregon," is not to be mistaken for the earlier book, "The Oregonian." After disappearing in 1970 and making a comeback in 1975, the 1980 edition of "The Oregonian" never made it to the printing press. The book left the University with a \$44,000 debt that the school had to pay.

But that won't happen this year, Bellomo says. "There will be a book this year. We're too deep in to back out now," he says.

"The Oregon" is independent of the University, with funding coming primarily from advertising and book sales, Wright says.

The staff, which consists of about 40 volunteer writers and photographers, and three paid editorial positions, rents off-campus office space in the upstairs of a local home. Rent for the rooms and salaries for

the editors have come from the 500-750 student subscriptions the book sold during its fall term sales push, Bellomo says.

But about \$20,000 still is needed to print 1,000 copies of the book and that amount will have to come from advertising, Wright says.

"Book sales are simply not enough to cover the production of the book," she says.

The staff has collected about \$1,500 in book sales, far less than anticipated. Bellomo says the staff hopes ultimately to sell at least 1,500 books.

Proofs of 32 pages the staff sent in to the yearbook company currently are being reviewed by the editors and 86 more pages are due this week. The 343-page book must be completed by spring break.

That means the staff doesn't have time to worry about money matters, Wright says. She said the division made in the fall allows her to concentrate on meeting production deadlines and making the book look clean, while Bellomo and Vroman concentrate on marketing strategies.

One plan is to eliminate the usual advertising in the back of the yearbook. Vroman and Bellomo say it is unnecessary and subscribers usually don't pay much attention to the ads. Instead, "The Oregon" offers businesses an advertising program that consists of several marketing alternatives, including advertisements in a coupon book to be distributed at registration times.

The program is sold with a money-back guarantee, Bellomo says. "If you don't get 30 coupons back in a month, you get your money back," he says.

He says the program should be effective. "Right now, our only major problem is finding people to do sales," he says.

Photos for a section featuring seniors and graduate students will be taken in February. Campus organizations and groups also will be featured in the book, and a "people" section will include photos of those students who want to be in the book but are not affiliated with a campus group, Wright says.

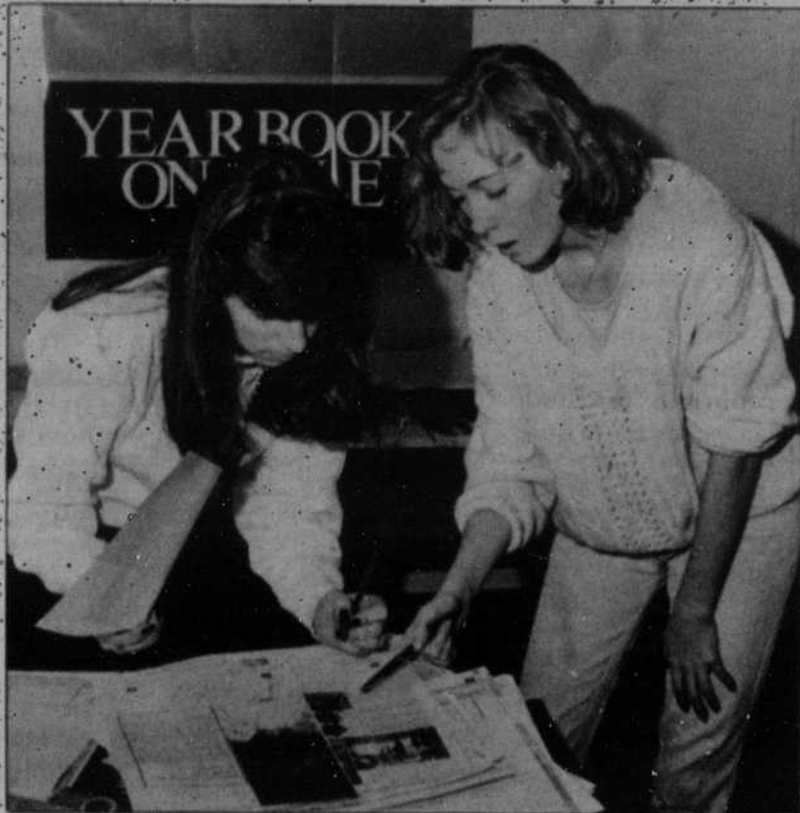


Photo by Nicholas Lenn
Pam Burke, left, and Sigrid Wright are working to make the University's new yearbook a success.

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