

Personality Profile

Bonds content with off-stage work

Arts a 'Peace Corps for the soul,' designer says

By Kelvin Wee
Encore Editor

Her name is Alexandra Bonds and though her work is imperative to the theater world, she is seldom greeted by roaring applause, asked for autographs or mobbed by fans.

For the past 10 years, Bonds has designed and built hundreds of costumes for dozens of productions in Eugene. Although all her work keeps her behind the scenes, Bonds said she would prefer it to stay that way.

"I don't clamor for audience applause," Bonds said. "If I wanted that contact with an audience, then I might have chosen to act. I'm a designer because that's the artistic expression in theater that appeals to me."

Bonds received her undergraduate degree from Syracuse University and her graduate degree from University of Denver. She worked in Minnesota for five years and at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis for a year and a half, after which she moved to Oregon.

But Bonds isn't just an ordinary costume designer or builder, as she may claim so modestly.

She also is the director of the University Speech Department's Theater Arts Area, a professor of the art, the chairwoman of the University Theater's Selection Committee and a world traveller.

The truth is Bonds's obligations keep her on the go from as early as sunrise until her final project is done each day, which often can continue past sunset.

"You would think that being a University professor or being in the theater, I have a lot of flexibility," she said. "But it's a nine to five job, and sometimes it's a nine to 11 job, depending on where we are in a production."

Within that time, she has to prepare for and teach two classes, attend faculty meetings, keep office hours, take care of UT business, as well as research, design, purchase materials for and build costumes for shows.

The whole artistic process for Bonds begins at the UT Selection Committee table when sug-

gestions for plays are received.

"We decide what our plays are going to be as much as a year in advance," she said. "The play selection process is a complicated one because we need to balance the needs of the students with the available resources in terms of time, money and labor."

"We also want to consider artistic, aesthetic possibilities," she said. "We like to think about an obligation we have to the campus and the community at large in terms of presenting different kinds of theater, different kinds of works."

After several months of meeting, the season is selected. But that is not where it ends for Bonds; it's only just begun.

As a costume designer, Bonds has to research the outfits for the play selected, considering the period and setting of the play, plus other factors important to developing that winning look.

As such, this leaves her constantly on the lookout for visual images that will inspire designs for costumes she has to produce for the shows.

"I keep my eye out for things that can possibly be an inspiration for a design for a show even though I am not consciously working on the play," she said. "It's always looking, always seeing. The designer is always looking for those visual clues to put together."

And for Bonds, these inspirations can come



Alexandra Bonds

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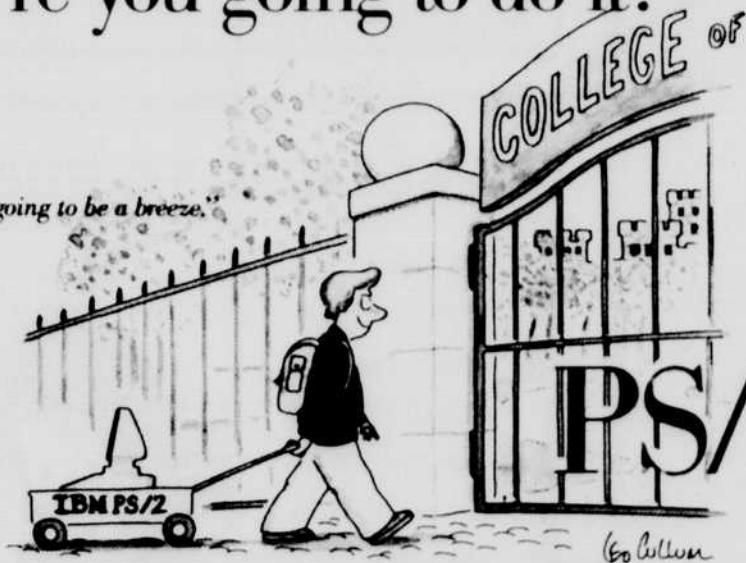
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