

Oregon Daily Emerald

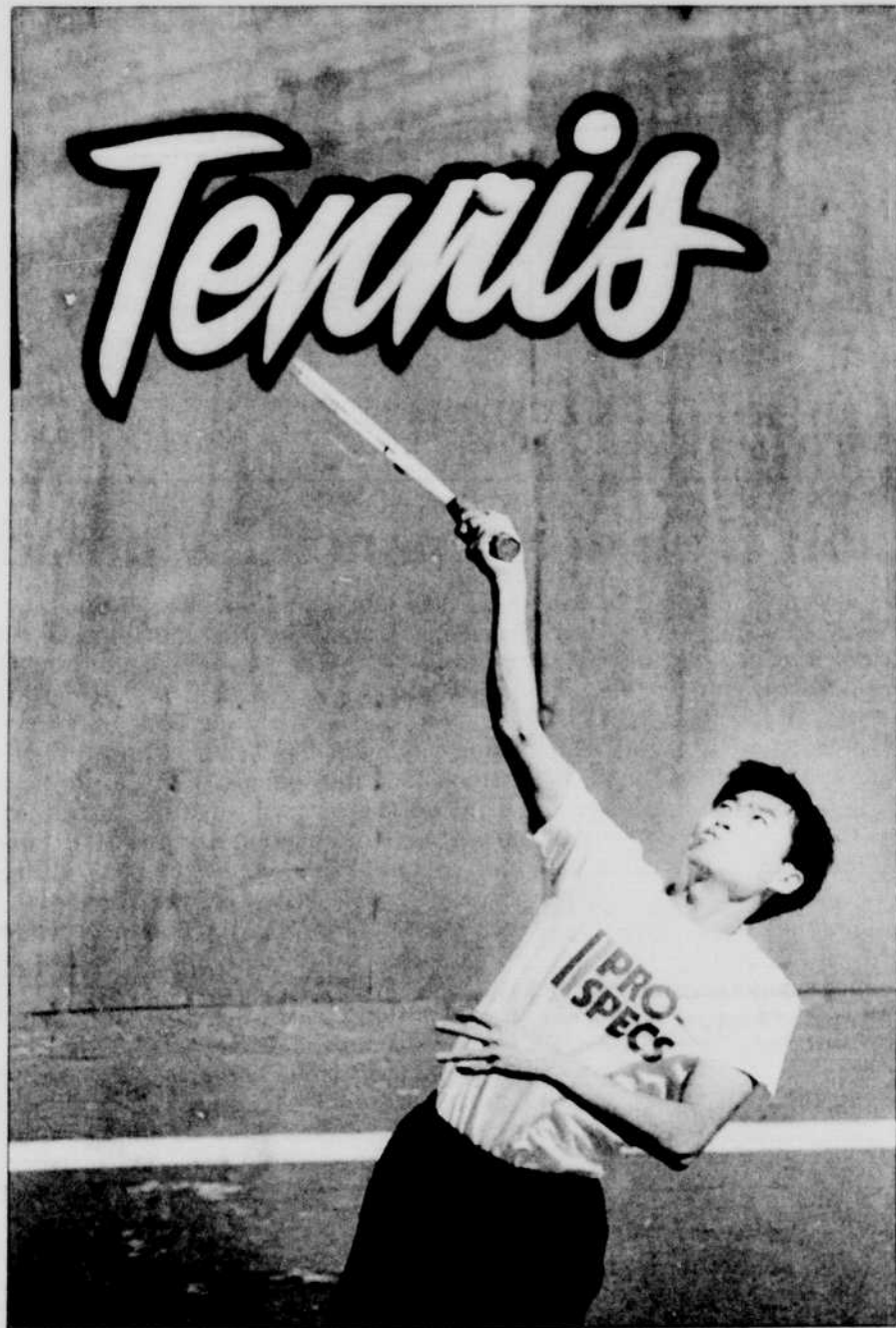
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Inside

- Shelter serves 500, Page 4
- Sex hearing canceled, Page 4
- Alumni art displayed, Page 11
- Football program, Pages 1-12B



Service with a smile

Seung-Chul Kim, a graduate student in the business school, takes time out to hit a few tennis balls Thursday morning.

Photo by Bill Haines

Morale at Physical Plant better with new director

By Chris Bouneff
Emerald Associate Editor

After nearly a year of controversy, the University Physical Plant is on the track to improving internal working conditions and service to its customers, said Dan Williams, vice president for administration.

Last spring, former Physical Plant director Harold Babcock was the subject of an investigation into possible improprieties, and although Babcock was eventually cleared, internal auditors did find instances of poor management.

Babcock retired later that spring, and Williams brought in Buff Roach to act as interim Physical Plant director until a national search for a permanent director could be completed.

The search turned up George Hecht, former head of the University of Southwestern Louisiana's Physical Plant, who will be responsible for improving managerial processes.

Besides the internal audit, the University's Department of Human Resources completed its investigation this week into alleged nepotism within the Physical Plant.

Williams also hired the services of a Portland consulting firm to analyze the management problems.

"There was nothing in the consultant's report that caught me by surprise," Williams said. "Having this kind of individual assessment brings credibility to what you want to do" in the way of improvements.

Two representatives from Coast Consulting Group surveyed Physical Plant employees and their customers to find areas of discontent.

"What we've done is combine functions together," said Michael Hipps, one of two researchers who conducted the survey for CCG. "Harold (Babcock) was divide and conquer."

Hipps said problems included a lack of adequate communication between departments and frustrated employees who felt their functions within their de-

partments were not clearly defined.

The study, which was released in August, found more than 70 percent of Physical Plant employees felt morale was low. Sixty-seven percent said attempted improvements in working conditions were not successful, but more than 70 percent said they would enjoy their job if some changes were made.

The survey suggests communication with employees and with management needs to be improved.

The management problems grew gradually during the 17 years Babcock headed the Physical Plant, but the solutions would not take as long, Hipps said.

"Seventeen years of certain practices and philosophies is ingrained for a while, and it will take some time to get over that," Hipps said. "It's a good group down there. Personally, I think it's going to work out."

Williams said he will work closely with Hecht to implement many of the recommendations made in the report.

Although the report's findings were not surprising, Williams said he did not know the problems were serious enough to bring in new leadership.

"I thought I could change things by working through the existing leadership," he said. "I did not appreciate the seriousness of the problems."

The nepotism study, which was completed by Office of Human Resources Director Linda King, found several questionable hiring situations that might fall under the state's nepotism law.

The instances occurred too long ago, however, for corrective action to be taken. Many of the original participants retired or were transferred to other departments, King said.

In her report to Williams, King found one instance where action needs to be taken, only because the situation might appear as favoritism toward a supervisor's relative.

King's list of conclusions included

Turn to Plant, Page 5

Speaker says attitudes must change to fight date rape

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Associate Editor

Dr. Andrea Parrot, nationally recognized sexuality educator from Cornell University, spoke at the EMU Ballroom Thursday night on "Sex and Power: the balancing act of the 90's."

Parrot, a nationally recognized author and expert on date and acquaintance rape, led an open forum discussion and video presentation, encouraging audience participation and feedback on multi-sexual concerns surrounding rape issues in university and social environments.

The presentation capped off a host of activities for Creating A Rape Free Environment (CARE) Week, sponsored by the Unwanted Sexual Attention Task Force.

The ASUO and the Women's Center will wrap up the activi-

ties Saturday with the "Take Back the Night" march beginning in the EMU Courtyard at 6:30 p.m.

Parrot outlined a number of contributing factors that typically surround date and acquaintance rape situations ranging from socialization to alcohol use. In addition, she offered advice to both men and women to help avoid and deescalate date rape situations.

She said that a great deal of misunderstanding between men and women stems from the variety of terms used to describe sexual organs and acts.

"It's very unclear what is O.K. sexually for each individual," Parrot said. "In our culture you don't have a common understanding."

Also, she said an individual's level of sexual acceptance varies by time, situation and dynamic pressures exerted by parents, peers and the media,

all of which can influence sexual decisions.

"Levels of acceptance change from day to day, from person to person," Parrot said.

Socialization, she contended, plays a major role in creating attitudes in both men and women that help perpetuate a date and acquaintance rape continuum.

She said that contemporary male upbringing instills aggressive, desensitizing attitudes that can manifest similar behaviors later in life.

By contrast, many females are brought up in passive roles, serving and accommodating the needs of more dominant men, Parrot said.

"Men are taught to be aggressive and women are taught to be passive and no one is taught to be assertive," she said. "If you put all of that together you

Turn to Parrot, Page 16



Photo by Andre Rameri

Dr. Andrea Parrot spoke at the EMU Ballroom Thursday night about date and acquaintance rape and urged changes in attitudes to combat rape.