

## Low item on totem-pole

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE ARCHIVES

# Drama head sees vision of arts center



**POUND**—Worker tends to new science facility. Photo by Ramona Isackson.

Second in a series  
By Sandy Carter

of The Print

How does Jack Shields, head of the College drama department, react to the fact that the performing arts center, a dream project that has taken shape primarily out of his work and research over a period of seven years, is low item on the College's building priority totem-pole?

The large man behind the curly black beard leans back in his chair as he considers the question. "Dammit," he says, with a wry grin. "There's no question about the need for a theater. It's way past time for the College to take its rightful place as the cultural center of the county."

Weighing his words carefully, Shields discusses the present and future needs of the institution, which have been evaluated by the Long Range Planning Committee and the administration and placed before the theater complex in the time frame of future building needs.

Acknowledging the need for library expansion and relocation of student health services, the drama instructor emphasized his understanding of the difficulty of weighing

"innovative" structure. "There is a set of 'ed specs,' educational specifications," he says, "and I've been involved in their development. I've been looking around (for the best ideas) both here and abroad, for several years."

The building portrayed in architectural terms in the "ed specs," would be unique, according to its booster. Shields' voice takes on a near-reverence as he describes it. "The bits and pieces of this concept exist," he says, "but nobody actually has it yet. The design is the 'black box' prototype."

Eighty-five feet square and approximately 55 feet high, the structure would be similar to a large gymnasium, says Shields, but with the capability of extremely flexible seating arrangements. It could house 400 people, in either presidium ("audience on one end; stage on the other"), arena ("stage surrounded by audience"), or stadium ("audience on both sides of the stage"), seating styles. Or, it could be quickly converted by ceiling-hung, mobile baffles into soundproof, pie-shaped quarters, creating four meeting-room type areas, each with the capacity to seat 75.

Termining the technology of the flexible seating modules "moderately expensive," the man with the dream adds that

consultants have indicated that the innovative structure of the present 'ed specs' could be built at "about the same cost" as the traditional, fixed-seating style of facility.

The administration, meanwhile, has spoken of plans to conduct a countywide survey of cultural needs. Shields supports the idea, saying "A survey may help us redefine. We may be talking about two spaces: a concert hall and a theater. But there's no doubt we need a theater. Entering McLoughlin Theater is like entering a concrete bunker."

Shields says several individuals on campus suggested that there may be private sector monies available for the arts center if need is proven by the survey. Private and federal foundations, according to him,

are other possible avenues to funding the project. But the survey must come first, he says. "If we can't rely on foundations and that sort of thing, then it (the tentative time-frame for construction of the center) probably couldn't be speeded up."

Asked if he felt the College location is suitably central for the purpose of serving as a county cultural center, Shields indicated that it is possible that the proposed facility wouldn't actually be on campus. He cautioned that speculation is pointless until the survey is done.

Unfortunately, as in all construction projects, passage of time means increase in cost. Shields puts the original pricetag on the performing arts project at "under \$2 million

four years ago." Now, he says, best estimates put the figure closer to \$5.5 million.

Like some sort of migratory bird, instinctively winging his way across the ocean each year, Jack Shields plans to teach this summer, so that he can return to the British Isles next fall. He intends to learn theater management at the elbow of the manager of the Clwyd County Theater, in Wales.

But right now, Shields is back home in his familiar bunker: a man awaiting the realization of his vision. Unless the vision is given an assist by a groundswell of public cultural support, or unless a fiscal miracle takes place, the performing arts center vision must wait at least five more years.



**ROCKET MAN**—Students oversee making of missile parts for Estacada's entry in the nationals. Six machine shop three- and four-term students spent class time plus 6 to 11 hours overtime completing the parts. Those students were: Ed Grauw, Howard Lillie, Richard Parker, Mike Shannon, Dale Troutman and Henry Secrist. Photo by Duffy Coffman.

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