

Sheng focuses on non-traditional careers

by Tina Early
Contributing Writer

Y. Sherry Sheng, director of the Washington Park Zoo, spoke on women in non-traditional roles last Wednesday at a breakfast organized by members of the Focus on Women program.

Sheng became the zoo director in January of 1988 following an extensive nation-wide search by the Metro Service District.

"People sometimes put us in boxes that they have defined for us."

Sheng was raised in Taiwan where she had supportive parents who did not try to force her into any role, traditional or non-traditional, but allowed her to explore her own interests. Even as a small child she had aspirations of becoming a pilot like her father who was in the Chinese Air Force. Although, at that time, women were not accepted into the air force her parents did not squelch their little girls dreams.

Now as the director of Ore-

gon's only zoo, she doesn't seem to focus on whether or not she belongs in her field because she is a woman. Instead, Sheng's focus is on being the best zoo director that she can.

"All my life I've thought not, 'what should I be doing?' 'What am I allowed to do?' But what do I have the ability to do?" Sheng told the crowd of about a 100. Sheng also stressed not putting limits on ourselves.

"People sometimes put us in boxes that they have defined for us....but the most important thing is that we do not draw lines around ourselves," Sheng said.

Sheng's appointment to the zoo makes her the second woman in the US to lead a major zoo. Initially, people questioned her ability to run a zoo of this size feeling that she may not have the experience.

Showing her sense of humor, Sheng told them, "I've never worked in a zoo for even one day before I got this job, but I'm an expert in running a zoo; I've read this book!" Sheng then held up the book, "If I Ran the Zoo" by Dr. Suess.

It's no laughing matter, though, the way Sheng has taken

hold of administering the Washington Park Zoo. She seems to have endless energy and determination and has many priorities for keeping the zoo up-to-date with the current standards.

"Zoos have to rise-up and meet new challenges," Sheng said, and related three of the main issues she wants the zoo to progress in.

Conservation is a priority with Sheng. "Conservation has to be achieved to save our wildlife," Sheng said.

"There are ways we can all make a difference. It's not convenient, but there is something all of us can do."

"There are ways we all can make a difference."

Also important to Sheng is the animal exhibits. She wants them to be not only attractive, but also to show the animal in as much of their natural habitat as possible. Breeding endangered species, however, is what Sheng feels is the most urgent issue.

An example is the endan-

gered Panda. There are only 600-1000 Panda's left in the wild and they are among the most difficult to breed, according to Sheng. A female Panda is in heat for only 2-3 days a year.

To help in this process of effectively breeding is a book zoo keepers across the nation now have called the "Stock Book". This book lists all the endangered species in the US, what zoo they are at, and such vital information as who their parents are, genetic and health information and if they've been bred before.

"We run something like a computer dating service for these animals," Sheng said, smiling.

In all, Sheng came across as hard working, determined, and someone who believes in herself. She knows what she wants and can do with her life and doesn't allow other people's ideas of what she should be to change her mind.

Sheng, who is married and

has two young sons, works hard to balance the demands of a career and a family, and is aware of the trade-offs and sacrifices involved.

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The Issues Breakfast is just one of the events put on by the "Focus on Women" program. Focus on Women is a series of events and credit classes designed to help women explore their lives, investigate life's problems and challenges, and meet together in an atmosphere of mutual concern and support.

For more information on the Focus program contact Donna Ford, coordinator, in the counseling office, ext. 266.

Theatre begins year eagerly

by M. Leigh Hagen
Staff Writer

The CCC theatre is springing to life this year with energy and enthusiasm.

Many new students have come into the theatre creating a wave full of talent and willingness. There are high hopes that this year's newcomers can help carry on the high quality of production that audiences have grown accustomed to.

According to newcomer Dennis Corwin, the theatre has become "a home away from home." Although school has only been in session for three weeks, the new friendships within the group have already begun to grow.

Theatre director Jack Shields said there was "sizeable interest" during auditions for the fall show, even though there were only five parts.

The fall show is an original play by F.T. Morris entitled "The Halfsoul Gift." This show is particularly topical, as it deals with the family unit- how it can deteriorate and how it can be fixed. "The Halfsoul Gift" takes a funny, heartwarming look at the Carder family and the problem that tore their family apart.

"The cast is seasoned and strong with rehearsals going well," said Shields.

For all of you that have thought of being in a live production, winter term is the perfect

time. The cast will be nine to twelve characters, a thriller or murder mystery and will also travel to Cannon Beach to perform over spring break. It's fun, exciting and offers many challenges. The theatre wants you!

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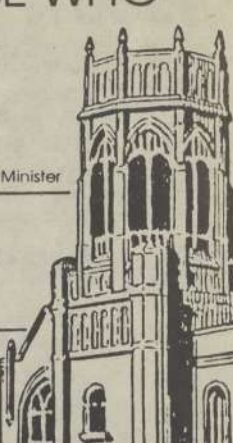
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