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Women carve bigger

By PEGGYANN HUTCHINSON

Mail Tribune Business Editor

"The economy needs us (women)," Margaret Hallock, Salem, economist, told members of the Oregon Division of the American Association of University Women Saturday evening during the annual state convention in Medford.

Speaking on "Pay Equity: It's Time," Hallock, director of research for the Oregon Public Employees Union, noted that the American economy during the past three decades has shifted from one based on products to one based on services.

Today only one-fourth of the work force is producing products, she said. And as the services industry has grown, the percentage of women in the work force has doubled. It will triple by the turn of the century, she predicts.

Some of the fastest growing segments for women have been secretarial, nursing, retail sales, and public employment.

Women have had an impact on the business world, Hallock said, as they have developed their understanding of the economy and how they can make changes. National women's organizations today have budgets larger than the national Democratic party, she said.

In 1970, 10 percent of the medical students were women, today it is 25 percent. In 1970 there were 100 women's studies courses in the nation's colleges and universities. Today there are more than 30,000.

"We are changing society. No longer are we willing to be shaped in man's roles," she said.

But "how were we greeted" by industry as a whole? she asked.

Women found themselves in low-paying dead-end jobs, earning 46 percent of what men were paid, and poverty became feminized. She predicts that by the year 2000, 100 percent of those below the poverty level will be women and children.

The woman college graduate today on the average is

niche in work force

paid what the male high school dropout averages, Hallock said.

While praising the "equal work for equal worth" law, Hallock noted that it "hasn't raised wages one penny."

Mentioning the many women who moved into non-traditional jobs in recent years, she called this "inherently limiting" since there are not enough non-traditional jobs for women. "There simply are not enough high paying jobs to go around," she stressed.

Hallock feels high school students have the misconception of how to get a high paying job, not "being aware of what it takes to get there."

"Instead of focusing on ourselves, we are focusing on jobs," Hallock said. Switch that focus, she stressed.

"We are nurturing people," she said. Women who care for children (day schools) are paid less than people who take care of the rats in a laboratory. A secretary is paid less than the person who mows the lawn.

She cautioned AAUW members to be aware of the

point factor job evaluation system, where the same set of questions are asked of every job. Such evaluation is an attempt to compare the complexity of jobs through accountability and responsibility. Under such an evaluation, she said, the scoring may be weighted to scientific factors, downplaying human relations skills.

"Emotional work is complicated," Hallock said. "We must change society to place value on people instead of valuing things. ... Wages should reflect skill levels and the value of those skills to the employer."

"Why pay less to workers who take care of people, than workers who take care of things?" she asked.

Women must continue to work for equal pay and comparable worth level wages, she stressed. If "we stop, it will be hard to regain the momentum."

Hallock said that Gov. Neil Goldschmidt has said he plans to start eliminating the wage difference in state government. Senate Bill 288 targeting this is scheduled for hearings this week. It will be more of a policy statement, she said, since funding has been deleted from the bill.

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Thanks to all

On behalf of the Medford Story-telling Guild, we would like to thank all of those individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of the 21st annual Children's Festival, July 12-14.

The dedicated efforts of 2,700 volunteers allowed us to continue this unique experience for children of the Rogue Valley. Those volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talent included chairpeople, booth workers, artisans, performers and musicians.

Special thanks go to Queen Ilma McKern, who provided magical enchantment for the children, and to the members of the Medford Rogue Rotary, who assembled and dismantled all the booths and decorations at the festival site. Other groups essential to our success were AAUW Rolling Thunder, Jackson County Parks, Britt Music Festival and the Jackson County Library System.

Along with the massive core of volunteers, local businesses deserve our thanks as well for their generous donations of materials, equipment and ideas. We also want to thank the area's radio and television stations, and newspapers for their willing, energetic and accurate coverage of the festival.

Finally, we thank the 10,000 children, both young and old, and the people who brought them, for joining us at this year's Children's Festival despite the record-setting temperature. It was an exciting and memorable time for all of us.

Thank you for your continuing support. We look forward to seeing you next year, July 10-12, at the 22nd annual Children's Festival.

Peggy Tomlins and
Becky Versteeg

Festival Directors '87