

Visiting Professor Addresses Women's Issues in China

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called Hand-in-Hand. This matches girls in rural and urban areas who are often as young as five. They correspond and send materials to encourage each other with their schooling. Educational advances even extend to the college level. Chinese women now account for 36 percent of the student body.

Apart from education and employment, family planning continues to be a concern for women in Chen's homeland. In an effort to control population, the Chinese government has mandated that couples may have only one child. This policy should help to eliminate poverty and make housing, education, transportation, and medical care more widely available.

Although Chen is most familiar with the impact of these issues on women in her homeland, she believes concerns about education and employment are universal.

"I hope my friends and other women will become independent economically and psychologically," she said.

"If you are independent, you can be confident and live a better life. If you don't take the chance to be independent, who knows what will happen to you?"

Chen's role as a mother has made her sensitive to the importance of home and family, but she believes that is not her sole responsibility.

"I have to do something outside the family, whether it is to teach or do research. I have to develop and train myself," she said.

Chen obtained her master's degree in 1993 in lexicography, which is the study of dictionary making, and lexicology, which examines the history and origin of words. She is also helping to develop a foreign language teaching program.

"I teach my students English," she explained, "and I am trying to find ways to make them better teachers

when they teach their students English." Chen eventually plans to obtain her doctorate in linguistics, possibly with a concentration in education.

Though she has no formal background in women's studies, Chen stressed the importance of learning about women's issues not only in China, but worldwide.

"I have been a teacher for more than 10 years, so I try to open the eyes of students by giving them more information and knowledge," she said.

"Many American students don't know about anything outside America. If they are globalized, it can only be better for them."

The Internet Brings New Ways to Buy Textbooks

College students can earn high marks in book buying this semester by logging on to one of the many new Internet sites that specialize in textbooks.

While many students prefer to visit the campus bookstore and flip through the pages of a text before buying, more and more are purchasing textbooks and supplies online.

While all of the major online textbook retailers offer the convenience of being able to purchase textbooks anytime of the day or night, only efollett.com - the pioneer in selling textbooks via the Internet - offers students the ease of online shopping with the convenience of on-campus service.

Students purchasing textbooks online should comparison shop to ensure that they get the best bargain.

According to the National Association of College Stores, students can spend as much as \$400 each semester on supplies and textbooks.

One of the smartest ways to trim textbook costs is to purchase used textbooks that retail for 25 percent less than new textbooks. Unfortunately, not all of the Internet sites offer used textbooks.

Additionally, it pays to compare prices when purchasing textbooks online. Some online retailers advertise huge discounts that are offered only on a few, select textbooks. Students should do a little research before placing an online order.

For more information, visit www.efollett.com. (NAPS)



Photo by Barb Roy

Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

By Barb Roy
Capital Times Staff Writer

This issue's featured staff member is Rita Slusser, coffee kiosk and cafe cashier extraordinaire.

She is a native of Bloomsburg. She grew up there and came to Harrisburg after she was widowed five years ago to be near her two daughters and seven grandkids.

Rita worked at Bloomsburg University's cafeteria for many years as a salad supervisor.

What she does when she is not at work: walks with weights, and hangs out in libraries, including PSH. Rita says she loves to read, especially medical-type mysteries like John Grisham and Robin Cook.

Favorite foods: veggies, and loves the food at the Lion's Den. She brings the grandkids here to eat. Rita insists she did not have to say that.

She says was a spoiled only child. Her favorite childhood memory: "My parents bought me a car when I was 16 and told me to behave," she says with rolled eyes and a "yeah right" laugh.

If Rita could live in any era, it would still be the present: "I love being on-line, sending e-mails and in chat-rooms.

Stop by and say, "Hi, Rita." She loves getting to know and talk to students and loves her job and co-workers at PSH.

Latest Churchill Play Takes Shape

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and laughter from the Jigger Shop drifted through open windows interrupting the absolute silence of the audience during dramatic pauses in the script.

A staged reading offers the playwright an opportunity to see how the play works when performed and to gauge audience reaction. Churchill addressed his sixty collaborators as the applause ended - requesting opinions on all aspects of the play.

He was particularly interested in opinions on his ample use of soliloquy. Audience response to the reading was positive and a visibly relieved Churchill was beaming.

"Son of Liberty" is based loosely on the life of James Swan, a little-known historical figure, who played a role in both the American and French Revolutions. Churchill focuses on Swan's 22-year imprisonment in France. It seems Swan chose to remain a prisoner rather than pay an affordable debt he felt was incorrectly imposed.

Churchill's fleeting interest in Swan crystallized last year into the undeniable need to write the play after a friend casually remarked, "Isn't it interesting how people make prisons around themselves all the time."

Churchill intentions for "Son of Liberty" are not historical in nature.

Instead, he focuses the audience's attention on the chosen prison of each of his characters. Even without lighting or props, Churchill skillfully isolated the characters at intervals throughout the play. The isolation permits the characters an opportunity to reveal their walls. It also permits reflective audience members a chance to pause and consider the bricks of their own prison.

According to Churchill, "Son of Liberty" is 80 percent complete. The creative process continues beyond the staged reading and the 60 collaborators of Mt. Gretna will have to wait to see the impact of their midwifery.

The staged reading of "Son of Liberty" was the final summer offering of the Mt. Gretna Cicada Festival. The Cicada Festival Committee, founded in 1995, works to include low-cost family entertainment to the other cultural events available at Mt. Gretna.

This summer, the Cicada Festival Committee collaborated with Riverside Playwrights to present five staged readings. As a member of Riverside Playwrights, Churchill feels the relationship benefits the Festival, the playwrights, the actors involved in the readings and the community. Churchill is confident the relationship between the two organizations will continue into the next season.

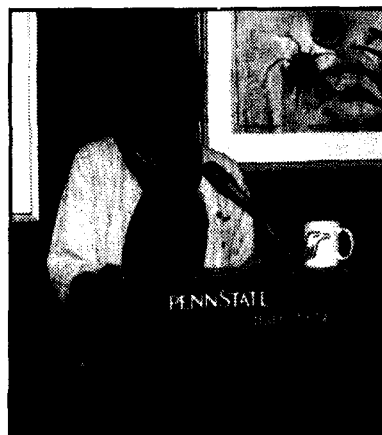


Photo by Matthew McKeown

Professor Congmei Chen, speaking in the Gallery Lounge on August 31.



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