

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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What does CCC need?

Next president faces enrollment, visibility challenges

If finding a job is arduous, so is hiring.

Clatsop Community College will not lack qualified candidates to be its next president. But the hiring process will likely take one year. College board directors recognized that in their decision to seek an interim president.

For reasons we do not understand, the college board is secretly developing questions for its prospective interim president.

The board must not be secretive about the main show — its hiring of a permanent president. The most important question of all is: What is college board seeking? And that gets to the question: What is the paramount task facing the next president?

The last two college presidents have faced combinations of cutting and building. Greg Hamann assembled the financial package to complete the extensive campus renovation. Larry Galizio shepherded the ballot measure in which voters approved a bond to renovate

Patriot Hall.

The college's urgent need is more students. Perhaps not a tidal wave of new students. But absolutely an increase in the student population. That is essential to CCC's financial health and its future.

One of Patriot Hall's biggest selling points was the programs it will create — for emergency medical technicians and other skills. That will draw a new student stream into the college, just as the new historic preservation program already has.

The college has always suffered from a certain remoteness from the rest of Astoria and the county. Being atop a hill, rather than in the heart of town, is a handicap — an invisible barrier. The college and its leaders cannot afford an inward-looking culture. It is essential the next CCC president grasps that challenge and has the personality to reach into Astoria and across the county.

Play on, play on!

For Astoria Music Festival, 13 is a lucky number

Thirteen is a lucky number for the Astoria Music Festival.

Astonishingly, that's the number of years the splendid event has been in existence.

When a tiny cadre of classical music enthusiasts gathered and said, "Let's put on an opera," we could not have known how it would expand.

The first year's modest but enjoyable "Marriage of Figaro" (complete with talented coast performer Deac Guidi) has blossomed into three weekends every June which draw music fans from around the United States. This year, organizers have packed 23 concerts into 16 days, advertising it as "big-city music, small-town price and Victorian charm."

Saturday, the audience at the Liberty Theater was treated to the return of charismatic Russian cellist Sergey Antonov. If you missed him, he'll be back for performances Friday and Saturday.

It is a treat to hear such familiar pieces as Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Beethoven's "Violin Concerto" and iconic Fifth Symphony performed live by the Festival Orchestra amid the wonderful Liberty acoustics. Sunday's fare included "Finlandia" by Sibelius, a piece with extra resonance for our Scandinavian community.

With the first weekend in the history books, music lovers can look forward to sparkling gems during the second and third weekends. There's a fun production of "The Magic Flute," with a maritime theme, and Angela

Meade, the hottest diva from the Metropolitan Opera in New York, will sing in the Northwest premiere of Donizetti's "Maria Stuarda." The delightful Centralia, Wash., product will sing the title role of the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots in the festival's concluding concert June 28.

(Opera lovers who meet Meade in person must be sure to congratulate her on her recent marriage, too.)

This weekend, much-admired Oregon favorites Richard Zeller and Amy Hanson will be among soloists in Bach's "St. John Passion" Saturday, followed by the Heritage Trio from Russia in a Beethoven program Sunday.

Maestro Keith Clark and his supporting cast of professional musicians deserve considerable praise for raising the artistic bar every year, earning national recognition and honors along the way. Current President Diane Tiederman and her board also deserve tremendous credit for working year-round to ensure the festival builds its success on a solid foundation.

We hope residents will patronize these sparkling concerts and invite out-of-town relatives and friends to come enjoy the music. The festival is part of a calendar of summer fun that boosts our regional economy while adding that priceless, feel-good attitude toward Astoria.

And everyone knows that playing to a full house makes entertainers strive for excellence just a tad more.

GUEST COLUMN

Affordable housing on shaky ground? It depends

By ADAM DAVIS

There is a proposal for \$100 million in state funds for affordable housing, something Oregon voters do not mention when asked unprompted as one of the most important problems they want their local and state government officials to do something about? Really?

The proposal is being championed by a governor facing a 2016 election in a state where existing services are likely to be cut because of the state Supreme Court's Public Employees Retirement System decision, where high school graduation rates are among the worst in the nation, and where a crumbling infrastructure threatens the state's economy. Really?

Affordable housing? Really?

Our focus groups and surveys suggest that Gov. Kate Brown (and Gov. John Kitzhaber before her) isn't crazy. In a recent DHM Research statewide survey, 63 percent of Oregon voters agreed their community had a significant affordable housing problem, and 62 percent agreed that low-income working families cannot find affordable housing in their community. That's what we call "validation" in the opinion research business.

Among groups that are often skeptical on these types of issues, even men (57 percent compared to women 67 percent) and Republicans (50 percent compared to Democrats 75 percent) feel that affordable housing is a problem. Additionally, regardless of gender and party, Oregonians feel wages for middle-income jobs have not kept up with the rise in home prices.

GUEST COLUMN

The advantages of a small, rural high school

By PAMELA S. ERICKSON

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you about how my education at Knappa High School prepared me for my career achievements.

As my classmate Rea Christofferson observed, an education at Knappa gives you many of the advantages of a small, private school. While you may not have a lot of fancy equipment or a large variety of class offerings, you got something better: a lot of attention, feedback and recognition.

To flourish, all humans need these things. In large schools with hundreds of students, it's simply impossible to give most students much attention. A teacher may see 150 students in a given day and barely knows their names, let alone their strengths, weaknesses and needs. My class at Knappa had 23 students. We had very close relationships with each other, with teachers and staff and with the parents. My teachers knew what I was good at and what I needed to work on.

After high school graduation I found out how difficult it is to navigate in a large school environment. I enrolled at the University of Oregon with 1,000 other freshmen. I was overwhelmed by confronting too many choices and not enough guidance. My grades fell to the point where I lost my scholarship. I transferred to Portland State for the sophomore year. At that time, PSU had little social life options, so studying was what you did. I remembered how valuable individual attention was in excelling. So I actively sought out professors and fellow students for help and discussion. I worked hard and regained my scholarship. I was voted the Outstanding Student in Political Science by the faculty upon graduation.

You too will have to find your way in our impersonal, mass culture,

So far, so good: Salem, we have a problem.

Well, sort of. Despite agreement that there is a problem, only about a third of Oregon voters feel strongly about that agreement. And in a trade-off context with other public programs and services, affordable housing has never been a top tier concern.

The upshot is that affordable housing is a concern of Oregon voters. Just perhaps not as big a concern as other problems.

What can the governor and her allies do to increase voters' concern and sense of urgency about affordable housing? Link it to something Oregonians care about more — jobs, for example.

Forty-eight percent of voters agree that local governments should prioritize investments in housing because it creates local jobs, 40 percent say they shouldn't, and 12 percent are unsure. So the governor making the connection to 11,000 new jobs, direct or indirect, is good.

But our research suggests the connection would be stronger if instead of "local government" she said "local government working in partnership with the community and the non-profit sector." Voters are placing a lot more trust in the non-profit sector these days than in the public sector.

Strengthen it even more by talking at the same time about what the money would mean for Oregon's small businesses across the state and you have the jobs angle covered.

The governor and her supporters can make strong connections to other issues Oregonians care about as well, such as helping children succeed in school and life, and making it possible for hard-working families to get the housing they need without



Adam Davis

sacrificing food and basic necessities. Support for working families is particularly appealing to moderate and more conservative Oregonians.

So Gov. (and soon-to-be candidate) Brown has herself an issue of concern to Oregonians, without a doubt.

However, the million dollar question about the \$100 million investment is how the program will be developed and presented to Oregonians. And even if that is done perfectly, we must still ask whether affordable housing will be able to beat back the competition for infrastructure funding from such heavy hitters as school buildings, water and sewer systems, and the new Multnomah County Courthouse.

It remains to be seen whether her handling of affordable housing will help her win money and votes next year, or help her opponents gain advantage against her.

Gov. Brown and affordable housing advocates need to be sure the program does not become the latest poster child for government wastefulness and unintended negative consequences. (Does the energy credits program ring a bell?) Instead, make it a partnership with the public and private sectors and talk about its importance for jobs and economic justice among hard-working Oregonians. Be creative, leverage other funding, and seek independent oversight. With these foundations, those thousands of new homes may get built after all.

Adam Davis, who has been conducting opinion research in Oregon for more than 35 years, is a founding principal in DHM Research, an independent, non-partisan firm. Visit www.dhmresearch.com

but your experience at Knappa will help you seek what you need to move forward.

Another advantage is the experience you have had in a small, cohesive community. Human beings are social animals. We get things done by working together in groups. While our cellphones and the Internet are wonderful devices, they are no substitute for strong human relationships. I was constantly reminded of this principle when I directed the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps. That program created summer jobs for youth in conservation projects all over Oregon. These projects always worked better in small communities. I remember the project in Burns, which I couldn't get moving until I drove out there and met the sponsors face to face. After that, they took care of everything: solved problems, managed the work, and created a recognition ceremony. On the other hand, projects in Portland usually had problems. In one case, a sponsor hired a drug dealer as the crew leader.

During my time at Knappa, I learned the value of strong parents and families. I knew all of my classmate's parents because, with few exceptions, they were at every school event. In fact, most events couldn't take place without parents' help. A lot of my recent work has been on reducing alcohol problems, particularly underage drinking. When I developed Oregon's media campaign to reduce that problem, I focused it on parents. Surveys make it clear that parents are the most important influence on a child's decision to drink or do drugs. And, I remember the powerful statement made by an Oregon high school student in a discussion with members of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. She said, "Peer pressure is overrated, parents are huge."

As adults, you will find life part-



Pamela S. Erickson

ners and form families. This takes a lot of hard work and is rarely easy, but the payoff is huge. Few things in life are as valuable as a happy marriage and a strong family. I simply would not be successful without the love and support of my husband, Bill Domstrand.

All of these things will help you when you hit life's difficulties. Life has pain, failure and hard times. No one really escapes these things. But, it's life's hard times that are your greatest learning experiences. In my career, I always wanted to be the head of a state agency. But, at one point, I started going backwards, having just been demoted due to a layoff. I almost gave up. Instead, I faced up to the fact that I had some weaknesses that needed attention. So I spent a few years working on those and eventually got where I wanted to go. I became the executive director of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and served in that position for seven years. Today I continue that work with my own business and the educational program I developed called Campaign for a Healthy Alcohol Marketplace. I am now a national and international expert on alcohol policy and have worked with over 20 states on alcohol issues. I developed it all on my own, but couldn't have done it without the firm foundation I got from my education.

All of the things that you have gained from your education here at Knappa will serve you well in the years to come as you transition into an exciting adult life full of possibilities.

Pamela S. Erickson, a Knappa High School graduate and former director of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, presented these remarks to Knappa High School students this month. She was inducted into the Knappa School District's Wall of Fame.

Where to write

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