

Plant

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In that master plan, the new water treatment facility is estimated to cost \$5.8 million.

Silverton's drinking water is currently piped in to the two existing water treatment plants on the block from the Abiqua Creek and Silver Creek.

The older of the water treatment plants was built in the 1950s, Gottgretreu said. It is only used in the summer when usage of water in the city is highest.

"This new plant will be entirely inside," city engineer Bart Stepp said. "All the pumps and everything will be entirely located inside."

Other council business

The council also awarded the contract for constructing the planned civic center to Corp Inc. Construction of Salem for \$14,750,000.

Initial plans are that it would be built at 401 N. Water Street, the site of the former Eugene Field School, which the city purchased for \$1 million and demolished.

The building would have space for the Police Department and may include city hall offices, council chambers and municipal court.

The city previously contracted with Mackenzie Engineering for \$467,879 for design of the facility.

It is financing the construction through Government Capital, a lender.

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Water is a key element in Silverton's character, and a key focus of the city's infrastructure developments. JUSTIN MUCH | SILVERTON APPEAL TRIBUNE

Sisters

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"Nothing like today."

A seed of faith

The Rausch family, the sisters said, was a spiritual clan. Faith ran deep with roots going back to their grandfather who received a publication sent to German Catholics, one that mentioned the Queen of Angels Monastery in Mt. Angel.

A seed had been planted, one that grew in time, watered by a family with an abiding faith. It blossomed in high school as each of the sisters remembered an affinity, if not a meaningful connection, to the sisters who taught Saturday classes during the summer.

"I so enjoyed them and looked forward to seeing them each Saturday," Christine said. "I wanted to make a difference, like they were doing."

Taking a lifelong vow as a sister was not so unusual in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was a respected profession, one that brought approval from friends and family.

Unlike her two sisters, Regina was not fully convinced she wanted to commit to one job, even one that was more of a calling. Seventy years ago, however, choices for independent, career-minded women were few.

"Today, women can be doctors and lawyers and anything they want," Regina said. "Back then, women could be a secretary or work in a restaurant. Or teaching or nursing. None of those appealed to me."

She thought about the sisterhood, prayed on it. Even after she took a train,

bus and taxi to the monastery's front door in 1953 when she was 18, she wasn't as confident as she hoped to be. Her father told her that if it didn't work out, she'd always be welcome back home, a thought that comforted her as she settled in.

Within weeks, her future was clear.

"I loved the monastery, the small town," Regina said. "More than anything I loved being part of a community. I never looked back."

A comforting routine

Each of the three embraced the routine.

Then, as now, days start at 7:30 a.m. when sisters gather for morning prayers, singing and reciting that day's selections (as they do during all group prayers). Mass follows at 8 a.m. with breakfast a half-hour later. The noon prayers precede lunch before the sisters return to their duties, gathering again for the 5 p.m. evening prayer before dinner.

The three credit the stress-free nature of a planned day for their relatively good health and longevity. The regularity settled their hearts and spirit, centering them on tasks ahead.

And their tasks kept them busy.

Dorothy oversaw the monastery's laundry operations, a huge undertaking when more than 100 sisters made the monastery home. Christine, who earned a bachelor's degree in education from Mt. Angel College and a master's in religious education at Seattle University, was a teacher as well as a director for adult religious education. Regina spent 45 years as a teacher, taking great pride in helping students reach their potential.

A favorite time, said Christine, oc-

curred in the wake of the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s when, as she put it, "the Catholic church opened the windows to let in some fresh air."

Among the many changes was that sisters no longer were required to wear the stiff habits, a uniform often associated with stern, knuckle-rapping nuns that policed schoolrooms.

"I felt that there was a wall between me and my students," Christine said. "I wasn't connecting with them like I'd hoped to because they saw me not as a person but as an authoritarian figure. When we were allowed to dress in regular clothes, I found it it wasn't me, it was the habit. It made a huge difference."

The sister sisters were not so busy as to miss how the monastery, and their livelihoods, changed over the years. Fewer women arrived each year. Numbers dwindled as did interest in the sisterhood. If the world didn't quite turn away from God, women did turn away from lifetime commitments to a religious career.

The world changes, but faith remains

Dorothy, Christine and Regina are quick to lament a world that looks almost nothing like it did in the 1950s and 60s. Where people once were united on various causes and beliefs, they tend to look for differences to enhance division. It was common for men and women to make commitments and stick to it, whether it was to jobs or a marriage.

And don't get them started on tech, especially Regina.

"There's always something demanding their attention," she said. "I was at a family picnic once and I remembered how much we loved being outside as

kids. Kids no more than five were looking at their iPads or whatever, caught up in games and movies and ignoring the beauty that was right there in front of them."

Today the Benedictine Queen of Angels Monastery has just 19 members, and the newest arrival will soon celebrate 25 years as a sister. It may only be a matter of time before that number dwindles to zero, and the monastery becomes a relic of the past.

There is no way of restoring those numbers among people who may have lost faith in the sisterhood, if not in the sisters themselves. But the sisters remain steadfast in their faith in people.

"We may never have the numbers we once did," Christine said. "It will be up to laypeople to carry on the beliefs and faith we built our lives on. I'm hopeful about that, more hopeful than worried."

Asked if they'd had any regrets, Dorothy, Christine and Regina shook their heads without a second's hesitation. They've taken pride and delight in what they've done over the years, leading hundreds of people down spiritual paths toward God and better lives.

That doesn't count the joy they've experienced among the sisters of the monastery. Not just the group prayers, but the dances and parties and laughter that are the brick and mortar of their fellowship.

For Christine, she is as sure of her commitment as she was 70 years ago, walking through the front door as a 20-year-old and greeted with a smile by an elderly sister unstable on her feet.

Christine will bear that smile, too, should another young woman arrive someday with a suitcase and desire to serve.

Community

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destroyed 700 homes and incinerated forests in the span of about 12 hours. The wildfires burned 400,000 acres — the third-largest fire since 1900 in Oregon. When help came pouring in, Chauran turned the focus on others. She helped launch a fund that would support local wildfire survivors in the recovery, cleanup and rebuilding of their communities.

Nearly \$4 million has been donated to the Santiam Wildfire Relief Fund to date.

"I grew up in this community. I raised my kids in this community," Chauran said from the construction site of their nearly-finished new home. "So when we came through and first saw our house, it wasn't about us. We looked around and saw all the houses that were gone, and I started putting faces to them, knowing this was going to take years. We didn't want those people to leave."

Chauran — pronounced Shuh-ron — said the fund wouldn't have been possible without the efforts of Deana Freres, a friend and neighbor who lost her vacation home during the wildfires. Freres took Chauran's idea, connected with the local hospital's nonprofit, and had the fund up and running within 24 hours.

The fund has served 1,201 families to date, according to its website.

Chauran, a senior accountant for the city of Molalla, is most proud that every penny donated stays in the Santiam Canyon.

"Rural communities are the best," she said, "and they're worth saving."

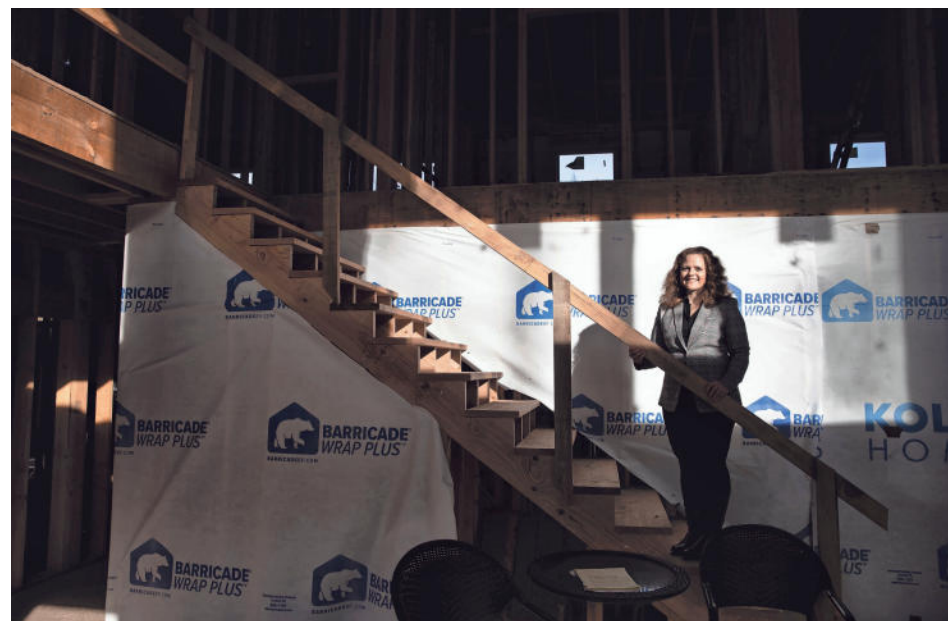
The Statesman Journal did a Q&A interview with Oregon's honoree. It has been edited and condensed.

Question: How do you overcome adversity?

Answer: We challenge them head-on, we don't make excuses, and we accept responsibility for our actions. And I have faith in this family. I know that it might take us longer, but we can overcome just about anything life throws at us.

Q: What helped you survive after losing your house in the wildfires?

A: Surviving a wildfire was some-



Cindy Chauran poses for a portrait in her partially built home in Gates.

BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL

thing I don't think we ever thought we would have to go through. Our friends and family are what got us through it. They brought us clothes, they brought food, they brought homemade meals and gift cards. They're the ones that lifted us up and gave us a boost so we could figure out what our next plan was.

Q: Where did you find strength?

A: I find my strength from him (pointing to husband Bryan). He's the one that keeps us all safe and makes sure we have what we need. I've had some pretty crazy ideas throughout the years, and he always supports me and never questions them. When I was 40, I told him I wanted to get my bachelor's degree. He's like, 'OK. What do you need me to do?' Then when I got cancer, he never left my side. I'm pretty tough, but without his support, there's no way that we would do what we do.

Q: Where did you draw inspiration?

A: My family. Bryan and I have always said it's us against the world, that as long as we were all safe and we were all together, then there wasn't anything that we can't do. And I have the most amazing network of family and friends, work families past and present, and they don't allow us to fail. And the people in this community, they're some of the most prideful and inspirational people you'll ever meet. It was pretty inspir-

ing to go through this with them.

Q: Is there a guiding principle or mantra you tell yourself?

A: In 1999, I started a coffee shop when my son Gabe was born because I didn't want to go back to work. I remember an elderly gentleman who used to come through the coffee shop every day, and I'd always ask him, 'How are you doing?' And he would always tell me, 'Any day I get out of bed and my boots hit the ground is a good day.' Bryan and I used to always laugh at that because we thought, you know, life is just that simple. You can be happy, or you can choose to not be happy. We choose to look at the positive.

Q: Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?

A: There's been a lot of influencing people in my life. I would start with my parents, who were high school sweethearts. They've been married for 54 years. That's pretty inspiring. My mom and sister both had cancer and won. My older sister has MS, and on her worst day she never complains. That's pretty inspiring. When I had cancer, we had prayer groups that this community started that I found out later stretched all the way around the world, and that was pretty inspiring. We have some friends who we've known all of our lives

About this story

Cindy Chauran lost her home in Gates to the 2020 Labor Day wildfires, but didn't give in to despair. Along with friends, she started a non-profit to help families affected by the fires and so far has helped 1,201 families.

that live here, too. They are always trying to help us. Bryan and I keep telling them we're fine, we're OK. And he got angry at us one time. He said to us, 'Don't take my gift away.' And then Bryan and I thought to ourselves, you know what, it's not what somebody's giving you, the gesture is the gift. We give thanks with grace now.

Q: What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

A: I think with lessons come mistakes, and I wouldn't change any of them because I've learned something from them. My kids, I've told them my entire life that life is not fair. My youngest used to hate it when I would tell him that. He'd complain about something and I'd say, 'Well, life's not fair.' And what we also told them was you can control your reaction. Life will knock you down, but how you respond, you can control that.

Q: What is your proudest moment?

A: It's hard to say because there have been so many in my life. My children are my most precious gift. Seeing them happy, have babies, follow their dreams, and feel confident to go tackle the world, I'm pretty proud about that. But if I had to say two moments, one is definitely becoming a grandma (Dec. 27) and the other one when our son graduated (March 4) from the Marines, for him to follow his dream since he was 4 years old.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

A: To slow down and appreciate the little things in the small moments, because we have found that those mean the most. And to give thanks with grace.

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