

Cuddy survives bad luck's blow

By Leanne Lally
Of The Print

In this day and age, women are blossoming. They're discovering their talents and using them. The '70s will be remembered for the rise of the women. ERA and other women's movements will be a significant force in years to come. This does not mean that every woman in the world will be out burning her bras tomorrow, but it does mean that women are no longer afraid to display their talents for others to see. And they are no longer being suppressed by others when they stand up and say they have something to offer.

One who is very active in developing her talent is student Mary Cuddy. Cuddy, who will be graduating this June, is an artist with a knack for zest, and a thing she calls the "artist sprit." Cuddy is a very versatile artist with her talents ranging from oil painting to clay, characatures, cartooning, pen and ink drawing, and typesetting. Cuddy has been attending the College for three years and says the educational experience has helped her discover and reach her goal.

"Most kids quit school and then go back," said Cuddy. "I quit school to get married. I did all my family raising first, and now I'm getting my education." Cuddy, now 36, recieved her high school diploma when she was 33. "I'm working for something now, I have a goal and college has really helped me."

Cuddy says Clackamas helps because it doesn't make a person feel uncomfortable about his or her age. "You go to

school with people who range in age from the high school 18-year-old to the 52-year-old who just got finished raising a family," she said.

Another goal for Cuddy is to have a one-person art show. "When you have an art show," said Cuddy, "you are saying, 'Here's a part of myself. They're hanging on the wall—my personality, my emotions, what I felt at the time. Now come in and enjoy me or take me home.'" Cuddy doesn't agree with the process of selling or "hawking" her talents at a fair or flea market. "To me that's a form of prostitution," said Cuddy.

"When you're trying to push your paintings on to the public, to me that's like pushing your feelings onto them," said Cuddy. "Paintings are like a possession to me," she said. "They're like a child. If somebody comes up and says 'Gee, I really like that,' I think that person is really going to appreciate my work like a pet, and you don't want to give one of your pets to someone who's going to abuse it or stick it in a corner," she said.

"If someone comes along and really appreciates the work they see, I'm more than happy to sell it to them," Cuddy added. "But if someone comes along and says, 'Well, that's a good price and it's got the right colors,' I won't sell it." In that type of situation, not only is the artist's painting up for sale, but so is the artist, Cuddy said.

When looking for a job in the art world, Cuddy says an artist really has to sell himself. "You have got to make people realize they need you and that you are talented," she said.

"You've also got to show them where you can do them good."

Cuddy feels that her talents are "inborn." Her parents gave her some encouragement, she said, but not as much as a person should get. "I was way ahead of my time," said Cuddy. "I used to do things 20 to 25 years ago that are just now being acceptable." Cuddy was hitch-hiking, riding in cars with boys, and smoking in the cemetery when she was 15. "But I don't smoke now," she said.

"My father was very strict," she recalled. "His strictness restricted my ability both creatively and artistically."

Cuddy now has two children of her own, a daughter, Shannon, 12, and a son, Rich, 11. Both her children are creative. "Parents need to encourage their children at a young age or they drift away," said Cuddy. "My parents encouraged me in a way they thought was right," she said.

"You have to be so careful with a child because you're responsible for another person's life, and you can screw it up by either sending them one direction or another." Cuddy said she can't "condem" her parents because she sees that they did what they thought was right for her. "But I have to stop and consider," said Cuddy, "how many creative people are stifled because their parents mistakenly directed them wrongly."

Cuddy has raised her children alone for six years now. "I was in a very unhappy marriage," said Cuddy, "I used to paint to get away from it. I can lose myself in my paintings." She said it was hard to be on her own after seven years of marriage. "You get in a rut, and you lose such a sense of self-worth that you think that's all you deserve."

Tragedy has had more than its share in Cuddy's life. She was a battered wife during much of her seven-year marriage. Later she met and



"fell in love with" a man who was involved in a fatal car accident. "I was going through a terrible grief period," said Cuddy, "but I had to keep it together because of my kids."

She looks at graduation as a "symbol of all my hard times and the agonies." Agony comes in the thought of what she would be doing had she not gone to college. "I would still be waitressing," she stated, "and on welfare. What kind of legacy would I be leaving for my children?"


"Kids take for granted the gown and the pomp and ceremony, but there's a real symbol there," she believes.

With all the bad things life has dishd out to Cuddy, to look at her one would not

believe that she has had the hard times. "If someone had come up to me 20 years ago and told me what was going to happen I would say, 'You're crazy, I'll never make it.'" she has, "because you have to believe that she has had the hard times. What has helped is the spirit, which makes you beautiful in all things, including the pain and agony."

"I've literally taken this one day at a time," said Cuddy, "even at times an hour at a time." But she says, "you survive. You make it because there are survivors out there and if you can take a look at what life has handed you and come out on top, then you are a survivor."

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Business club sponsors dance

Disc Jockey Bustin Loose will be featured at a disco dance to be held at the College March 16, from 8 p.m. to 1

a.m. The dance, sponsored by Phi Beta Lambda, student business club, will be in the

Community Center building and is open to the public. Also featured will be a dance contest and a light show.

Students working on the dance include: Brian McFadden, Della Riggs, Ginny Riggs, Jan Loidiodi, and Joanne Lane, Oregon City; Ted Moore and Norma Lamar, Milwaukie; Jerry Frey, Dorothy Wehner, and Ace Wehus, Canby; Elizabeth Hayton, Colton; McKeever, Gladstone; P. Ferguson, West Linn; Donna Laizure, Beavercreek.

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