

Former Dean Kaiser 'relaxes' around house Furniture design one of many interests

By Shelley Ball
Of The Print

Retirement is generally termed a time to put one's feet up and relax; however, Ronald Kaiser, former Clackamas Community College administrative dean of instructional services, doesn't prefer to retire in the usual sense of the word.

Since his retirement from

the College on Dec. 31, Kaiser and his trusty note pad (it already contains pages of jobs for him to do around the house) are currently keeping him busy.

Such jobs are to be found on Kaiser's 17-acre farm in Beavercreek, where he lives with his wife of 38 years, Violet. These jobs include farming Christmas trees, tending an orchard and vineyard, some remodeling and clearing

timbers of ash, alder and cherrywood to make furniture "for my (ten) grandchildren," Kaiser said.

In addition to spending time at his farm, Kaiser said he is also doing some educational and management consulting for Oregon State University (OSU) and the state Department of Education. He also plans to do more hunting, fishing, traveling and writing.

Kaiser retired from the College at the age of 59 because he said he was ready, after nearly 15 years with the College and over 20 with community colleges in general, "to do something else."

Originally from Kansas City, Kan., Kaiser moved to Oregon in 1957 with his wife and four daughters. "I had come out here (Oregon) three years earlier, and just fell in love with the place," he said.

Diversity appears to be a main element in Kaiser's life, for just like the many features on his farm are varied, so have been his places of employment. Kaiser has worked at many trades: from toolmaker to constructing railroad cars, from owning his own contracting business to a hotel night clerk, even a teacher at OSU. Somewhere between jobs Kaiser managed to serve two

years with the Marines during World War II, and receive his bachelor's, masters and doctorate degrees at OSU.

In 1962 Kaiser came to work as a curriculum development specialist for the state Department of Education, in which he was involved in helping the then new idea of community colleges develop courses. At this time Kaiser said there were only about three established community colleges in Oregon. "It was very exciting getting in on something on the ground level," he said.

By 1969 Kaiser had joined the staff of the College as the dean of occupational education. He explained that his job consisted of helping design the College's two-year associate degree programs. "I hired someone to do the work, otherwise I wrote them (programs) myself," Kaiser said.

To this day College programs such as drafting technology, law enforcement and industrial mechanical technology are to be credited to Kaiser.

Although his former job title at the College has changed over the years, to end up as the administrative dean of instructional services, Kaiser said his job duties were basically the

same. Appreciation has been shown for his contributions to the College in a number of ways, one in the form of a plaque presented to Kaiser by the assistant deans in 1981, who affectionately labeled him the "Iron Duke." Another was an Elks' Lodge roast on Dec. 2, to which Kaiser said he thanks all who participated in it. But why is he called the "Iron Duke?"

"I tend to be a little bit directive in my administration, rather than reflective," Kaiser said with a chuckle. "When the time came to make a decision, it was made."

In reflecting on his years at the College, Kaiser said the development of programs highlighted his career. He also said the College has one of the best instructional staffs in the state, although he added, "I am prejudiced, because I hired most of them."

As for the future, Kaiser said he would like to see more people use the College's services, as he thinks the College is currently "underutilized."

"A lot of people who have no idea what to do, and you see them become successful through completing an educational program—that's probably where I got most of my kicks," Kaiser said.



Retired Dean Ronald Kaiser

File Photo

Voc. Tech. speech Conner breaks ground with avant-garde class

By DeAnn Dietrich
Of The Print

Clackamas Community College vocational departments have faced a problem for several years. It seems a large percentage of students enrolled in certificate and degree programs have failed to complete the required written and oral communication classes.

To receive a certificate and/or associate degree in programs such as waterworks technology, welding, machine shop, and hydraulics, students must take courses in writing and speech skills. The problem is that students don't perceive these classes as being useful in these trades. The worst of requirements is seen as the speech class because of the fear associated with its expectations.

Due to growing concern, several department heads began researching the problem and looking for an answer. The answer turned out to be a revitalized speech class. It could actually be termed an inner personal communication course. This new class takes away the stigma of the title

"speech class." There are no tension filled moments and cold sweats as students stand in front of the class. Instead, Instructor Connie Conner integrates role playing into the theme of the class, the theme being "How Other People See You."

Formerly a part-time teacher, Conner now has full-time status due to the new class. A large part of the class could be considered as psychology. Fundamental techniques are explained along with their use in manipulating situations, giving people more control over their lives.

"An experienced interviewer, like the ones at Tektronix, can spot an attitude problem easily," Conner said. The class aims at giving a person the skills to convey the kind of disposition they wish. "Communication starts with your self-concept," Conner said.

Basics such as self-conceptualization, phraseology and effective listening skills are useful for anyone, but they are especially helpful to people who may need to deal with customers. The class points out personal habits which may create problems in

business negotiations later on. Conner said that most people are unaware of how their phrasing may put others on the defensive. Unconscious habits such as responding to a statement with the words "yeah, but" automatically create a defense reaction in the other person.

Conner directs her approach to teach communication skills through practical applications. Her philosophy is, "They're in the vocational area, so let's give them basic skills to use day to day." Besides the interview skills, she covers how to deal with authority figures, problem solving, telephone skills and working with conflicts and complaints. Conner points out that, "Conflict can be either positive or negative. It gives an opportunity to understand people better than before."

Conner has found that, for some students, behavior modification born from increased self-awareness is definite and some students have related stories of improvement in personal relationships. "The thing I appreciate is they are really trying hard. They can see a practical application for these



skills," Conner said.

One of the most useful tools in the class is a video tape machine. Students are able to see how they may subconsciously aggravate situations with body language, inflection and phrasing. By watching themselves as others do, these points become obvious.

Conner began to generate

interest by speaking to certain vocational classes and spreading the word that this wasn't what most people would expect from a speech class. Most people were surprised at the practical uses for such skills in vocational areas. Conner hopes the class will increase in popularity as more people discover it.