

Monologue

Performing arts center would benefit many

By D. Dietrich
Arts Editor

As the spring term concerts roll around, once again the need for a performing arts center at Clackamas Community College becomes painfully obvious. Yet another year has gone by with little push toward the much-needed facility. Except, that is, for the generous donation of \$1,000 by former College President John Hakanson, specially designated for the stagnating arts center fund.

Although Hakanson's gift was a well-intentioned thought, the fund is still short of any realistic level for building an arts facility. About \$9 million short, based on the rough estimate of College Theater Director Jack Shields.

When the College was first built in 1966, an art center was among the top five of objectives set by the Long Range Planning Committee. In the meantime, the Music Department was nestled in above the gym and the Theater Department found a home in what Shields less-than-affectionately terms "temporary housing in a concrete bunker."

Thirteen years later, not much has changed, except the \$5.5 million increase in the projected cost of such an undertaking, and the absence of federal funding. In 1972 the idea got so close as to send Shields out looking at and researching different types of art centers both nationally and internationally, so the problem is not one of not knowing what is wanted and needed in the way of a cohesive and comprehensive building.

Instructors in the Music Department have expressed their frustration in the lack of practicing areas as well as less-than-adequate performing space. "We have no place to perform," Lonnie Cline, band instructor at the College said.

Citing the Community Center's poor acoustical design, lack of workable space and the theater's lack of stage and audience space, the remaining alternative sounds understandably absurd when Cline said as more of a statement than a question, "Chamber music in the gym?" One needn't be a classical fan to see the aesthetic incongruencies faced by both vocal and instrumental groups at the College.

As Cline sees the problem, the College's Music Department is unable to help the declining enrollment of full-time students without being able to offer an attractive program. "Almost all the high schools have better performing facilities than we do," Cline said. Students are likely to turn to the more marketable colleges and universities. Even with the students that start out their first term at the College, there is a problem keeping them here. "They (students) like the direction they receive, but move on to better facilities," Cline added.

Not only would the College's population benefit from the addition of a performing arts center, but equally as well would the surrounding communities. If the space were available, "actual road shows could be invited to the campus," Shields said. If so, then Cline's researched statistic which states that, "More people in the United States attend live performances more than any other function—including sports" would come into play. For those of you doubting football fans, remember, there used to be an off

season.

Local chapters of organizations such as the Elks or the Lions would also be able to take advantage of a all-purpose art center. Groups could keep the center a resource to a variety of causes and efforts for nominal rental fees.

As it stands, this area offers nothing in the way of an arts facility. The nearest cultural events are found in Portland, which makes for a long late-night drive for the citizens of Molalla and other outlying communities. Maybe with a place to perform the severely-limited dance program could realize its potential.

The idea isn't a new one and the size of the project is definitely intimidating. The idea that needs to be brought to view is that it takes money to make money. The only way to pull off this project is to attain the community's interest. But with operating levies having enough difficulty passing, the hope is present but dim. With a strong backbone of community support, though, maybe Hakanson's contribution won't have to have been made in vain.

ELC compost seminar due

Learn how to convert your yard debris into fertilizers, rich humus, soil amendments, and potting soils at a free seminar this Saturday, May 18, at the Oregon City Senior Center.

The Rapid Compost Seminar will be conducted by the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center in conjunction with the citywide clean-up drive scheduled for the same day.

Recycling experts will teach participants how to make garden mulches, slow-feeding demonstration begins at 2 p.m. at the senior center, 615 5th St.

High schoolers to repair lame cars in troubleshooting test

Ralph Nader would have a field day if he showed up at Clackamas Community College tomorrow when ten brand-new Plymouth Turismos full of defects arrive at the college. But this time, the cars are supposed to have problems. The nation-wide Plymouth - AAA Troubleshooting Contest will be hosted by the college for the second year in a row.

Automotive students from 10 Oregon high schools will compete against the clock and each other to identify and

repair malfunctions deliberately installed in the electronic, ignition, fuel, emissions, and other systems of the identical cars.

The contest is co-sponsored by Chrysler and the American Automobile Association.

Two-man teams from Newberg, Mt. View, Cottage Grove, Eagle Point, Newport, Franklin, Benson, Springfield, Columbia, and Cascade High Schools were chosen to compete based on their performance on written tests.

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