

Writer's visits to the Enviromental Learning Center are rewarding

by Diane Stachnke

My first visit to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) was on a bright crisp day in the winter of 1989. I was curious about this "beautiful park-like place" which had been much touted by Anne Pardington, one of my instructors in the Displaced Homemaker Program, which I was involved with at the time.

The center was founded by Jerry Herrmann in 1976. It is located at Clackamas Community College, in Oregon City, on 15 acres which were formerly an abandoned industrial site. The ELC benefits our community in many ways. It is a refuge for fish, fowl and wildlife. Additionally, it offers a full-line recycling center which is open seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Other attractions are the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Fish Rearing Facility, the celestial observatory, the gift shop, the greenhouse and the Meeting Center-Pavilion. Also there are ponds and streams surrounded by winding walking paths, these dotted with benches and boulders, as well as little rustic bridges. One of the ponds now sports a floating stage, which is where last summer's *Jazz Over the Water* concerts were held.

So whether you are a student, faculty member or just one of the locals -- I hope that if you've never been to the ELC, that you will make a point to go over and see what is there. As a student it's to your advantage and increased enjoyment to learn what resources are available to you on campus. Since it has an "out in the back forty" location, I think many of you have never been there, and since it's surrounded by trees -- one of the reasons for it's existence -- it's easy to miss it as one drives by.

My own experiences at the ELC have been rewarding. I've gone over to eat my lunch, or to walk-jog during my P.E. classes or to do some homework. Numerous times my children and myself have come to escape the summer heat or the stress of daily living. The ELC is a peaceful, cool place where the loudest sound I've heard is the song of a bird. I also like to buy cards and gifts in the small gift shop. Since I am at



Students who need to escape from daily life may find the ELC a place for them. The floating stage at the ELC was used for the *Jazz on the Water* performance last summer.

Photo by Lane Scheideman

CCC almost everyday, it is very convenient. But I think the things my children and myself have enjoyed the most are the birds, and their numbers are increasing all the time. The latest additions include the bald eagle named "Denali," the bobwhite and two ring-necked doves. There are also numerous ducks, hawks, owls and other birds. One day we also enjoyed helping to feed the fish in the holding tanks. We watched them swim up to the surface in unison, with mouths open, their blue backs setting the water in motion momentarily, then diving to the depth again, till we tossed in the next handful -- then they would come again.

The center has many things to offer, so whether your bag is the stars or recycling, fish or wildlife, plant life or just a place to relax, the ELC couldn't be more handy. For those of you who don't know where it is, the entrance is located on Inskeep Drive, near the north end of our track and field area. It is probably no more than a 15 minute walk from any point on campus, as well as being accessible for those people in a wheelchair.

Possibly you are someone who sometimes feels stressed and wishes you could find time for some peace and quiet. Maybe you've wanted a place to exercise, to walk

or a place to sit and sketch. If this sounds good, then the ELC is the perfect environment for you. If you say "yeah but I don't have time," I say "balderdash!" It takes only minutes to walk there, and this is good for you. You have to eat lunch someplace, so why not brown-bag it and enjoy this scenic haven? If you have homework you would be doing at the school -- weather permitting -- why not go outside? Also, it is quiet there, there are benches, tables and chairs, and nothing will detract from your concentration.

Another facet of this ever-changing center is the full-line recycling plant. For any of you who perhaps feel concerned about environmental issues, this is an excellent place to get answers to your questions, as well as a place to bring all your recyclables. The facility takes glass, paper, cardboard, styrofoam, aluminum, car oil, scrap metal, cans, milk jugs and newsprint. The center is open seven days a week. As a person who favors saving our old-growth timber, I am heartened by Mr. Herrmann's non-leaching plastic lumber, which can be seen in use at the center. I now save many of our throwaways for recycling and feel happy that habitat is being preserved for our diminishing wildlife as a result.

The ELC is a varied and wonderful place with an emphasis on what is natural and healthy for all ecosystems. I have mentioned just a fraction of what it offers, and I hope you will go over and learn more. Perhaps become a member, or a volunteer. For my family it has always offered positive experiences, and we look forward to many more. I can remember times when I considered involving myself in recycling and environmental issues, but asked myself "what difference will it make?" if, for example, I save milk jugs? If you too have wondered what difference one person can make, you will have your questions pleasantly answered in a multitude of ways at the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center.

From the Editor

Invited performers deserve courtesy

Last Wednesday James Hersch was performing in the Community Center Mall at noon; I went by to listen to him. When I got there I was amazed at what I heard. I was also disgusted at what I saw.

It wasn't Hersch that made me sick. He put on a great one-man show. It was the behavior of the students in the Mall that made me sick. I thought they were rude and distasteful.

Even with a microphone and speakers turned on, the students' talking, laughing, yelling, throwing things and getting up and walking around overpowered Hersch. He couldn't be heard over all of the commotion.

ASG invites people to perform during the lunch hour for our benefit. They pay these people money to come and entertain us. They aren't invited as a test to their ability or to out-perform 20 people who are laughing and talking.

I realize that the Mall area is a gathering place for students, but when there is an invited guest performing, the students who aren't interested should find a different place to hang out. It isn't fair to the students and faculty who got to listen to the performer and are instead forced to listen to disinterested people gabbing.

This has been a continual problem at Clackamas since I started here three years ago. It seems that there is no solution. We are supposed to be responsible adults. We are supposed to be able to conduct ourselves in a reasonably responsible manner. It's obvious that some of us don't know what that means.

One solution might be to have a mini-concert monitor. Someone to throw the



rude people out of the Mall when someone is performing. Or we could suggest to the performer that whenever people are being too loud, they stop performing until it's quiet. These suggestions may seem a bit childish, but when dealing with adult children, what are your options?

Let's see if we can improve this situ-

ation. Remember your manners the next time someone is performing in the Mall during lunch. If you aren't there to listen, go somewhere else. Put yourself in the performer's position. It must be hard to be invited to perform and then to be drowned out by an uninterested audience.

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