

ASG women face challenges of balancing m

by Melissa Freels
Co-Editor-in-Chief

May and June were months of change for two of CCC's Associated Student Government officers.

In May, Amy Gaskell was elected as the ASG President, while Shauna Barnett was elected as the ASG Vice-President, both for the 1992-93 school year.

In June, Barnett became a mom when she gave birth to a baby boy. Coincidentally, around the same time, Gaskell learned that she was pregnant with a baby due in December.

These kind of things can change a person's life forever.

Both Barnett and Gaskell, however, have not changed their personal or ASG goals, they have just changed the route they will take to achieve them.

"It was an unexpected pregnancy, but it's been a joy since," said Barnett, who had her son, Brandon Wayne Barnett, on June 16.

Barnett, who will turn 21 at the end of November, is raising Brandon as a "single mom," but she is receiving a lot of help and support from her family. Being the oldest of seven children and still living with her parents in Newberg makes it easier to find child care.

"There's always someone there to help," Barnett explained. "It's like having seven little moms (for Brandon)."

Brandon's father is currently stationed in Japan on the USS Independence with the Navy. He and Barnett had dated for four years, but when she became pregnant their relationship changed.

When Barnett became pregnant, the couple weighed all of their options and finally settled on adoption—a decision that the baby's father overruled when he blocked the adoption. Despite his promises to pay child support, he hasn't. By his own choice, he has not played a role in the baby's life since it was born.

This month, Barnett received another promise from Brandon's father. "Basically he just said he'd pay (child support)," she said. This is a promise that doesn't mean much to Barnett—at least not until she actually receives the money.

When she looks at Brandon, with his big brown eyes and thick black hair, Barnett realizes how happy she is that she kept him.

"It's great," Barnett said about being a mother. "At night I can lay there and hear him breathing and I can't imagine my life without him." She has realized that giving birth to Brandon was her best option. "I see why people are against abortion when I look at him and see how cute he is," she said.

Barnett admits that she does have some fears concerning the future. "I'm very scared about raising a child in this day and age," she said. Being a mother, "the decisions you make will change that child's life."

The happiness and joys of motherhood, however, can outweigh the struggles Barnett faces now and those she will face in the future.

"I feel like I'm being pulled in all these different directions," Barnett said as she described her current struggles. "The hardest thing is juggling time."

Like a typical college student, Barnett faces financial struggles, and with a baby to care for, those struggles are two-fold. That is why Barnett juggles three part-time jobs. She currently works at British Steel Alloys, but plans to quit and continue working at her other two jobs—being a student assistant at CCC's Counseling Department and cleaning houses.

Barnett's parents realize the problems she faces, and at critical times, like "when I run out of diapers," she laughed, they often lend a hand financially. "I'm really lucky, the way it's set up (living with her parents). I admire women who do it on their own," she said.

Currently, Barnett is taking 12-credit hours, and with the 3.0 GPA requirement for ASG officers, school can be tough. According to Barnett, however, her grades haven't reflected the struggles that she has been going through. "Actually, my grades have come up a lot since last year," she said.

Having the baby has made Barnett realize that now she has important responsibilities. Not only is she responsible for her



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—Shauna Barnett
ASG Vice-President

own life, but for her son's life as well. This, she said, creates "more pressure to get good grades." Now, "I'm a lot more focused on what I want," she explained.

This is Barnett's third year on ASG at Clackamas, so she has had a lot of time to set goals for her Vice-Presidency. Being Vice-President had been her goal since she first became involved with ASG. This year, she is placing emphasis on the New Year's Eve drug-and-alcohol-free party and CCC's Christmas charity program. In addition, Barnett is trying to organize an adopt-a-care-home project for ASG.

When the school year ends, Barnett will be faced with more decisions—one being where she will go to school. "I always wanted to do the 'college thing,'" she said. "Now, I just want to get through it (school)."

Barnett is considering taking courses at Clackamas through summer term, but hopes to transfer to another school in the fall. Currently, she has three schools in mind: George Fox College, Portland State University or Western Oregon State College.

Barnett plans to enter the education field and has a variety of ideas for the future. She is considering a career as a college instructor, but would also like to start her own private school someday. In addition, "I want to be able to teach my son at home," she said.

Despite her ambition and hope for the future, Barnett is going to miss CCC. "It's going to be hard for me to leave Clackamas... going out of my comfort. I'm safe here," she said.

Barnett's "comfort zone" at Clackamas has made it easy during the difficult times—especially now that she has a baby. ASG plays a major role in that zone. She describes Norm Berney, ASG's new adviser, as being "wonderful." The entire ASG staff, in fact, has been very "receptive" concerning Barnett and her child.

"They've loved him (Brandon) as much as I do, they're all really helpful," she explained.

Barnett places emphasis on the fact that Gaskell has also been very understanding. "Amy was very supportive when I was pregnant, so I expect to reciprocate. I will insist that Amy takes time off to care for her baby. I'm real excited for her..."

Like Barnett, Gaskell is in her third year on ASG at Clackamas. She was an ASG Senator for two years and she really enjoyed her work with student government. "I really thought that more could be done," she explained.

So, Gaskell worked her way to the top.

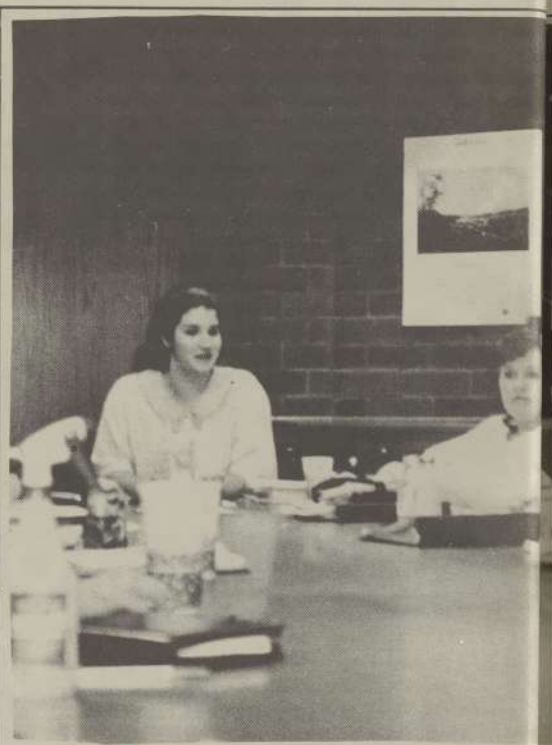
Now, as the ASG President at CCC, Gaskell's job entails much time, effort and hard work. Between President's Council, ASG, Executive Council, College and ASG Committee meetings, she attends at least eight meetings in a five-day week—this does not include off-campus meetings at other colleges.

Being President, Gaskell has realized that "any problem in ASG is a problem of mine." Unlike ASG senators, Gaskell can't isolate herself to one project because "at the same time, I've got all this other stuff hovering above me," she explained.

ASG projects aren't the only things "hovering" above Gaskell. She still has 14-credit hours of school to consider, and she is expecting a baby in December.

Gaskell, who will turn 21 on Jan. 11, and her fiancé Rob Hibberd, 23, learned that she was pregnant in June. The couple had planned to get married last July, but decided to wait until the baby is born.

Gaskell and Hibberd, who consider themselves as "survivalists," don't look at the baby as a hindrance to their plans and goals. "The timing of the events just occurred differently," Gaskell explained. "We already knew,



ASG President, Amy Gaskell, and Vice President, Shauna Barnett, ASG students have faced enormous changes in their lives since

at that point, that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together."

The soon-to-be-parents are, in fact, very proud and excited.

Gaskell pats her stomach and says, "See how big I'm getting?" as she talks to a friend, while Hibberd, the Co-Editor-in-Chief of *The Clackamas Print*, drinks his daily coffee from a mug with the words "I Love Daddy" printed on it. On the opposite side of the mug is a photograph from an ultrasound of the baby at four months.

Gaskell admits, however, that "it's been really challenging." Attending meetings and classes can be tough when dealing with the physical and emotional changes that occur with pregnancy.

"One thing I've realized, it's not morning sickness... (because) it was 24-hours-a-day for me," Gaskell said of the first five months of the pregnancy.

Being so busy, Gaskell says she really hasn't had a chance to enjoy her pregnancy, and she has been irritable (although it doesn't show). She is looking forward to the baby's birth, when she says

she will have her personality back.

Many of the challenges that Gaskell has faced over the past eight months, however, have been balanced out by support from others.

"The support that I (have) received from my family made a world of a difference," said Gaskell, who grew up in Estacada as the oldest of 5 kids in her family. "My mom is so excited. We've really grown close through this whole thing."

ASG members have also offered their share of support. Their regular method of support, called "warm fuzzies," (positive thoughts and messages written on cards or notes) has been very inspirational for Gaskell. CCOSAC (Community College of Oregon Student Association and Commission) even made a special "maternity" CCOSAC sweatshirt for Gaskell.

Barnett has especially helped Gaskell during her pregnancy. Barnett is "kind of a success story to me... She's a hard working woman... a good friend who's constantly instilling in me the confidence to make it through



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