

Clackamas: A closer look

Coming Features

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Reaching goals despite handicaps

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Thirteen-year-old wizard takes classes at CCC

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CCC student first in the nation for BMX racing

New swing class is up and moving

Scuba diving class goes deep

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was designed to feature important, fun, unique, special, exciting, and interesting people, places, classes and events.

If you know someone or something that deserves to be featured in this section

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Thanks!*

Brennan: Pushing his students toward success

SHELBI WESCOTT

Feature Editor

Life has a funny way of turning out differently than we had planned. Just ask Kelly Brennan, communications instructor and director of forensics at Clackamas Community College.

In 1990, after several failed attempts at starting college, he moved from his Irish community in Chicago to Oregon with the ambition of attending Portland State University. However, he hadn't realized that PSU had a six-month residency requirement.

After Brennan's sister suggested Clackamas, he reluctantly enrolled, with the intention of attending only one term.

"I thought to myself: I didn't come all this way to go to a community college," Brennan recalled.

But he was destined to be at Clackamas. He was destined to accidentally enroll in Frank Harlow's "projects in public speaking class" and get hooked on speech and debate. He was destined to be entered into the wrong division (the senior, instead of novice) in his first tournament.

No matter how you look at it, there can be only one conclusion: Kelly Brennan belongs at CCC.

Brennan is engaging, personable and dynamic. He exudes confidence, but is humble about his tal-

ents and accomplishments. His students praise him, and his speech team adores him. In the five years he has been directing speech and debate, he has led his teams into 21 championships and watched them win more than 1,000 individual trophies.

"The students go out there and get all of these awards, and the coach gets all the pats on the back," Brennan said. "But they're the ones who are out there winning."

And winning is what the speech team does best. With Brennan by their side, cheering them on and giving them pointers, they emerge victorious. Sometimes the victory doesn't come in the form of trophies or superlatives; it can come in learning from mistakes and making improvements or overcoming personal weaknesses.

"I tell my students that five years down the road it won't matter how many awards they've won, or how many compliments they've received. What matters is how they communicate with people," Brennan noted.

Brennan is able to speak from experience when he says that mistakes can enable success. Through his years as a speech and debate competitor he made his share of mistakes and had his share of losses. Instead of dwelling on the negative, he looked for ways to improve his performance. His main source of instruction came from other competi-



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tors. Watching them and figuring out what made them successful made him a better speaker.

"Success leaves clues," Brennan said, "and when I would find those clues I would apply them. Now, I try to package them in some way and give them to my students."

Brennan feels it is rewarding to see those students take what he has taught them and succeed. He is most inspired when he can watch a student transform from a shy and inse-

At A Glance

Name: Kelly Brennan
Occupation: Communications instructor (speech, interpersonal relations, broadcasting, mass media and more). Director of Forensics
Years at CCC: 2 (as a student), 5 (as an instructor)
Hometown: Chicago, Illinois
Hobbies: Restoring old houses, being with his family
Education: AS CCC, AA in Religious studies CCC, BS in Speech PSU, BS in History PSU, MA in communications WSU, working on PhD. in Education from PSU.

cure speaker into a gold medal award winner. Although the student is responsible for the transformation, Brennan's hard work and support is no doubt a factor in the speech team's and individual student's success.

"I've been fortunate to have students with drive, hunger and talent," Brennan expressed.

And each student would be fortunate to have Brennan as an instructor.

Featured class of the week

Beginning rock climbing

What is it? The beginning course teaches basic rope climbing and rock climbing techniques. Including: eight knots for climbing, how to tie into the rope and harness correctly, belaying, repelling and prusiking (climbing back up the rope).

Class requirements: No climbing experience necessary. You must be safe and you must have fun.

Credits: 1 credit hour

Available: Fall/Winter, Tuesdays and Thursdays 6-9pm

Course number: PE185-47 (beginning - sections 48 and 49 are for intermediate and advanced students respectively).

Instructor: Matt Canham, nine years of climbing experience across 13 states and parts of Canada.



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Travis Lewis repels

off of the

rock wall in Randall Hall.

He is one of the first students to take the beginning rock climbing class now offered at Clackamas.

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