

Nelson retires after 27 years

MATT SHERPERT
Staff Writer

Gary Nelson, head of the music department, will retire this winter, after 27 years of teaching at Clackamas.

"Junior colleges, or community colleges, are the best possible places to teach, and Clackamas is the best one to teach at," Nelson said. "The thing we're probably the proudest of is that the students who came here wanting to do something with music left here able to do it."

Nelson has been at Clackamas since the beginning.

"I feel a real kinship with Clackamas. The very first concert that the music department did for this school was in 1967, and I was a ringer that was brought in by my then music chairman Leroy Anderson," he said. "I happened to be studying with him when I was going to Lewis and Clark, and he needed a few extra players to fill in. So I've had an association with the college since the first thing they ever did."

Through the course of his musical career, Nelson has played with innumerable groups and for some very prestigious people. His computer has page after page of the names of the people and groups he's played with and played for, including many musicals, ballets, Natalie Cole, Sonny and Cher, Mel Torme and even the president.

"I think probably one of the most fun things I've done was the last time Chicago was here... we got to be part of the action," Nelson said. He went on to explain that as one of the local musicians hired to play with the touring company, he was treated like he'd been with the show for years.

Nelson had good things to say about his 27 years spent at Clackamas, although he regrets retiring just as the music department anticipates new facilities. The department has long been sharing Randall Hall with the PE Department.

"The facilities are not very good, but that's going to change now because of the passing of the Bond. That's one of the things I'm a little disappointed in, is that I won't be taking as active a part;

though I do want to take a part in the design and construction of the building," Nelson said.

As far as his plans after retirement, Nelson plans to stay active in the community and in life.

"Well, I've got a lot of traveling that I haven't done, mostly southern hemisphere things where the seasons were reversed, and if I went during the summer here when I was able to go, it would be winter there. I've got other places that I want to revisit. I want to do some music publishing, and I'll also probably start an excavating firm... private excavator, heavy equipment."

In the course of his life, Nelson has traveled all around the globe, and his love of travel began at an early age.

"My sister and her family were in the diplomatic corps... along the way they were in Guatemala, Washington D.C., Taipei, Madrid, Moscow, Beijing," said Nelson.

"So, that was what got me started traveling, my sister and her family. And I've gone to Europe, I don't know, a couple dozen times, Nepal, and Tibet, and India.

"Travel," Nelson summed up, "changes the way you look at things."



Gary Nelson, music instructor

Feature

Former Clackamas student makes a living off sports betting The Gambler...

RYAN BRINKLEY
Contributing Writer

Jack readies for the day much like any business professional. His shirt is pressed, his breath minty fresh and his eyes wide. He enters the nondescript office containing just a few desks. On his desk before him is one telephone, a box full of index cards and a notebook housing a list of contacts. At the desk next to him, a Caucasian man with a New York accent, is alternating lies into the handset of his phone with liberal swigs of Budweiser.

It's 8:30 in the morning.

Jack used to attend CCC. He's 24 and last took a class in 1995. Jack (not his real name) looks like a guy who might sit next to you in the library or in a classroom. He's not a former pro athlete or coach. He's just a normal guy.

What Jack is however, is a sports fan. Much like any of us, Jack looks forward to watching a game. However, his enthusiasm goes far beyond loyalty towards the home team.

Jack advises gamblers for money.

Here's how it works: A gambler wants to bet on a game. He may want to place the bet in an office pool, state-run lottery, on-line casino or illegal bookie. But before he makes that bet, he seeks the advice of an "expert." The gambler then calls an 800 number to consult a handicapping service, purely for advice. The voice at the other end of the phone talks fast and knows exactly what to say.

For example, the voice may tell the gambler that the Blazers will beat the Mavericks on Thursday by nine points. But it doesn't stop there. He then tells the gambler that he can tell him the winners of the rest of the month's games for a \$1700 charge.

The gambler reluctantly begins to reach for his credit card. Little does he know that the next person who calls the service for "sure-fire winners" will be told to bet the Mavericks. At least one will win.

Jack got involved with the betting service after a move to Las Vegas to start a new Internet based company. He looked for a job to

help with expenses.

"I answered an ad in the paper," he recalled. "It said 'People needed to sell sports information for a commission. Experience preferred but will train the right person.' My training lasted one day. I went in on a Tuesday and was cold-calling people on Wednesday.

"We pressure them like crazy, say that we've been in the business for years, anything. Some guys use a

script. We drum our fingers on the desk, to make like we have computers. We'll pull back from the phone in the

middle of a conversation and yell for our imaginary secretary to bring us coffee. It's like that movie Boiler Room, just with sports instead of stocks.

"All the people whose names are on the cards are all people who've been burned by some other handicapping service. I'd say that out of a hundred people I call, 80 don't answer. Of the 20 who do, 10 tell you to F— off and hang up. Out of the 10 that you actually get to talk to and pitch to, I'd say that 95% of them want a free game.

"We take their credit card number and tell them that a verification company will be calling them back. Then we give their phone number to someone else in the office who goes in another room and pretends to be from this fictional company. They ask them in some phony voice if they accept the charges. They always do.

"We use numbers that are blocked to caller ID devices. We have, in our building, three phone lines in the names of different companies. That way we can pitch to the same people over and over again."

So how much does Jack's company charge for giving out winning teams?

"It depends. We find out how much they're betting. The more they bet, the more we charge."



THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

There's not much science involved in deciding on the company's picks.

"Our radio ad says that we have a staff of world class experts. The truth is, there's only four of us and the other three guys I work with are all degenerate gamblers, who never win.

"There's one guy who picks the games we give out. But he bets like Vegas wants people to bet, taking the favorites. Lately, we've been winning only about twenty percent of the time. One weekend, on college football, pro football and pro basketball, we went 3(wins) and 17 (losses)."

In the light of their inability to pick winners, how do these companies survive?

"Well, I don't see us lasting past Christmas. We aren't organized well. The big, heavily funded handicapping services can survive because they advertise a lot and are constantly bringing in new clients. We don't have the money for that. In fact, the three guys who are running our company are all skimming off the top behind each others' backs.

"You hear all kinds of stories.

Some of our clients bet five or ten thousand dollars on a game and the pick we gave them lost. One guy called in and said that his wife left him because of his gambling. But they always call back. They need to because they're all usually in debt."

When asked who his clients bet with, Jack said, "I'd say the majority bet with illegal bookies."

Jack intends to get another job or perhaps just bet on his own.

"When I go against what the manager gives out, which we're not supposed to do, I win about 60 per cent of the time. If I leave the company, I'll try to take my clients with me."

According to Jack, there's definitely a market for handicapping services.

"If somebody doesn't know anything about sports, I can see how a handicapping service can make money. But you call one of these guys you better know who you're dealing with."

Some of our clients bet five or ten thousand dollars on a game. . .

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