

# Jen Nelson pursues dreams, change through extracurricular activities and political activism

**Erinn Lerten**  
Design Editor

Jen Nelson's goal in life is simple: she wants to change the world; she says this with a clarity and determination not found in many people her age.

This determination has driven her academic and extra-curricular involvement at Clackamas the past two years.

Nelson joined the speech team winter term last year.

"Initially, I was just looking for a way to pay for school. I didn't want to pay for it and I knew I had the qualifications to do something to pay for it, so I went to Kelly Brennan and asked if there was any way to get a scholarship and he said 'Yes, definitely.'"

She started speech team with no prior experience, and describes her first tournament as very nerve-wracking.

"I was never very confident at all speaking publicly," Nelson said. "Kelly [Brennan] said it was just a 'get your feet wet' kind of tournament. I didn't take home any prizes, but from there I learned the ins and outs."

Success was not far off. Last year Nelson took home a national championship with her persuasive speech on lifting the sanctions on Iraq. She also took home two state championships in interpretive.

"They're all so fun," said Nelson. "Like debate, it's funny because I'll go home, and I'm argumentative by

nature anyway, and we'll get into a hot topic and my parents won't even talk politics with me anymore."

Nelson describes Brennan as not only a mentor but also a friend. "He's taught me so much, and been a shoulder to cry on when I needed it," she said.

This year Nelson has served as the president of Phi Theta Kappa. As president her job is to facilitate meetings and make sure things are going according to plan.

"It's been a huge learning experience. I have some amazing officers," Nelson said.

**"I don't want to close the door to possibilities."**

**Jen Nelson**  
CCC student

Currently, she is working towards the International Phi Theta Kappa Convention in Anaheim, Calif. The event will focus on health and feature speakers from the American Cancer Society. Some ideas Nelson has for fundraising are a battle of the bands and a golf tournament.

"We have some fun stuff planned," she said.

As for reaching her lofty future



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*Jennifer Nelson, CCC student and national award-winning speech team member, strives to change the world as she continues to educate herself. Despite being offered a full-ride scholarship to Lewis and Clark College she is considering other schools.*

goals, Nelson is already planning. She's been offered full scholarships to several schools including Lewis and Clark.

"Lewis and Clark will give me a full ride if I do speech and debate, but I don't know if I want to tie myself to that. I'm torn between going to an amazing undergraduate program. That would be Columbia or New York University. There are some really awesome schools on the east coast. Or

it's a matter of knowing someone who will get me into the graduate program," Nelson said.

She has been heavily involved with the Political Science department as Dean Darris' student and teaching assistant, as well as with the Conscious Citizens' Coalition.

"It's great to have that expertise," she said in reference to Darris, "to just be able to soak it up."

Although she loves speech and

debate, Nelson's desire to be politically active is driving her to pursue that avenue.

"I really would like to be able to focus more on international law and diplomacy," she said.

Nelson describes her future plans using words like activism, lobbying, and Congress. "As far as career plans, who I'm going to work for, I have no idea," Nelson said. "I know I don't want to close the door to possibilities."

## Clackamas instructor, Vietnam veteran Widerburg compares current conflicts to past war experiences

*•The potential war with Iraq has Vietnam veteran Widerburg remembering the past and worrying about the future*

**Andy Price**  
Staff Writer

The recent onslaught of news about the chance of a war in Iraq has many Americans afraid of what may happen in the near future, but how do generations that fought in past wars feel about what is going on in the world right now?

Allen Widerburg, an English teacher at Clackamas who fought in Vietnam, shared his war experience and his feelings about the possible war with Iraq.

"It's a very scary time," Widerburg said. "Saddam needs to be stopped. The president of Korea needs to be stopped. There are 26 wars going on in the world right now, and terrorists are spreading."

Widerburg was drafted to go fight in Vietnam in 1967. He was given 30 days to prepare to be shipped off to war. He didn't try to get out of fighting because he had just gotten married. He knew that he could either fight in Vietnam for a year, or go to jail for five years.

Widerburg was told that he was going to be sent to a place that hadn't

seen any combat yet. He was sent there, but was quickly transferred eight miles away from Cambodia and was in the line of fire the entire year he was there.

"Right after I got sent home our base got overrun and my friends got shot up," Widerburg said.

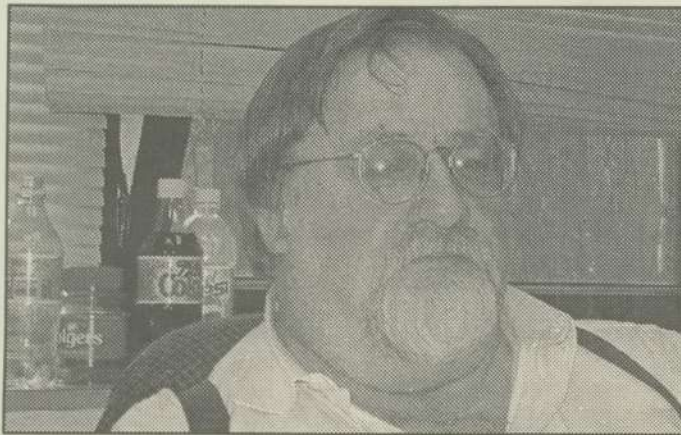
When Widerburg returned home the whole country was in turmoil. Many vets were protesting against the war, and for good reason. President Nixon said he had a plan for peace, but it was over five years before it achieved peace. He falsely told the American people that they were being bombed, just to get the country to support him.

Widerburg attended PSU when he returned home. People were protesting all over and being clubbed for it.

"These days remind me of that a little bit," Widerburg said.

If this war breaks out it will be a different war than Vietnam. Both armies are more technologically advanced now. Also, Widerburg said in Vietnam it was mostly jungle fighting, but this would be desert and city fighting. Cities in Iraq are very similar to our large cities. Baghdad is really no different than LA; there are roads, big buildings, and lots of people.

"I suggest students get informed about what's going on in the world," Widerburg said. "The only thing that we know of Iraq is what the media wants us to see on TV. Whenever we see Iraq on TV we see Saddam with a sword in his hand or shooting a rifle. We never see what any of the citizens do."



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ALLEN WIDERBURG Contributed

*Left: Allen Widerburg, English instructor. Right: Widerburg 35 years ago. Widerburg shared his experiences in Vietnam, and compared them to the recent threat of war. Widerburg suggests that students get informed about what is going on in our world.*

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