

Royal: 'He was a man with great vision'

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Nebeker's wife Sarah, daughter Hannah and son Israel.

Letters supporting the name change have poured into the college from former colleagues, students and friends. Nebeker is credited with helping build not only the college's lauded arts program, but also the arts community on the North Coast as a whole.

"We believe that this is a fitting honor for a former long-term faculty member who has had such an immeasurable impact at the college and in the community," said a letter by the college's art faculty, recommending the name change to interim college President Gerald Hamilton.

A life on the coast

Originally from San Francisco, Nebeker moved to Astoria in the mid-1970s after earning a Master's of Fine Arts from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. His wife Sarah Nebeker said after the meeting the move was on a whim, as her husband had originally wanted to live in a more urban setting.

"But when he saw the landscape, it reminded him of Norway and he loved it; and the fact that there was such a strong Scandinavian community, him being of Norwegian descent and speaking the language," she said. "He was charmed by it."

After a two-year stint



Clatsop Community College/Courtesy Photo

Royal Nebeker attends the opening of the Yoshihiko Yoshida exhibit in 2011. Nebeker, who taught at the college for more than 30 years, is credited with inspiring many top-notch artists, while bringing even more to the North Coast.

teaching drawing in Oslo, Norway, Royal Nebeker returned to Astoria in 1978 and joined the college as a full-time faculty member for the next quarter century, directing the program from 1998 to 2004. He stayed on as an adjunct faculty member until shortly before his death.

Royal Nebeker is credited with turning out students who went on to some of the best art schools in the country, while also bringing many global artists to Astoria.

Sarah Nebeker said her hus-

band saw the potential of Astoria to develop into an artist's enclave. Meanwhile, his work, much of it created in his iconic "Big Red" net shed on the Astoria waterfront, has been exhibited around the world. In 2006, then-Gov. Ted Kulongoski appointed Nebeker to the Oregon Arts Commission, a state body fostering art.

"I think it will help to inspire future faculty, future students to say 'Who's this person,' and to learn about him and what he did," Sarah Nebeker said of the Royal Ne-

beker Art Gallery. "He did so much. He was tireless in his efforts, and he was a man with great vision, and we need more people like that."

As part of the exhibit opening Thursday, Israel Nebeker, a frontman for indie folk band Blind Pilot, said he will play "Joik No. 3," a song from Blind Pilot's upcoming fourth studio album. Joik is a type of song traditional to the Sami people of northern Scandinavia. The song will also be performed on NPR's "All Things Considered."



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The late Royal Nebeker's "Hamlet's Dream" oil painting is one of his many pieces on display at the Clatsop Community College's newly named Royal Nebeker Art Gallery.

MORE INFO

Clatsop Community College's art faculty exhibit, honoring the late Royal Nebeker, opens 6 p.m. Thursday at the Royal Nebeker Art Gallery, 1799 Lexington Ave. in Astoria. The exhibit continues through Jan. 14.

Remembering Roy Garrison

The Royal Nebeker Art Gallery is housed in the college's art center, established in 1979. Dave Phillips, the college's former vice president of instruction and student services, said the art department's director at the time, Roy Garrison, who died Sunday, helped push for the idea at the college, which used a combination of local and state funding to build the structure.

In her letter of support for the Royal Nebeker Art Gallery, retired math instructor Gerry Swenson mentioned another

proposal to name the college's 3D art studio after Garrison.

Swenson said Garrison was the first full-time art instructor at the college and was instrumental in hiring Stanley Wanlass, the second full-time instructor at the college and a world-famous bronze sculptor. When Garrison left the college in the late 1970s, Swenson said, he likely influenced the selection of his replacement, Nebeker.

"Having made such important contributions to the Art Department of the College, he is more than deserving of having the 3D studio named after him," Swenson said of Garrison.

Fire chief: Balzer was given a chance to resign or retire

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Board member Garry Smith, who has background as a volunteer firefighter, said Balzer did not fulfill his job duties and, despite mentoring, did not improve over time.

Balzer was not in attendance at the meeting and his family declined to comment afterward.

"Mike was an incredible, exemplary firefighter for 30 years," board member Bob Cerelli said. "Nobody is questioning that. But I'll be 100 percent truthful now, a great firefighter isn't necessarily a great administrator in the office."

There were issues that had been ongoing for two years, board members said. If community members had come to more meetings, Cerelli noted, they

would have known.

Community member Alaina Giguere said many were shocked by the termination. Her concern was with how Balzer was let go. She said it felt criminal and was "in poor taste" to have a police presence at the meeting he was dismissed.

Clyde said the police department asked if board members wanted that presence there and she said yes because it's hard to predict what someone will do when terminated.

Giguere said Balzer is a former police officer and respected community member.

"He has been a respected member of this fire department



Mike Balzer

for more years than any of us can remember," she added. "And, truly, for you guys to terminate him in the manner that you did is disgusting and disrespectful and reprehensible. And I think you owe him and all of us a complete apology."

She said it "looks crazy" that Clyde bought a lock from Balzer's son-in-law's store for the fire chief's office. Clyde replied it was the only hardware store in town.

Community member Erik Meyer said the board should have placed Balzer on administrative leave for transparency and given him a chance "to save face."

Smith said Balzer was given the chance to resign or retire. He added that the board gave Balzer multiple opportunities and presented him with a time frame in June, "so he wasn't just suddenly ousted out of the fire department."

Cannon Beach resident Susan Neuwirth said she and others would have helped "fill in the gaps" by assisting Balzer in filing or filling out paperwork. "Don't let this man go," she said. "He's golden."

Community member Mary Peterson said she'd heard Balzer had good rapport with the firefighters. "Whether he deserved it (termination) or not is really not the issue," she said, but rather the treatment Balzer received. He deserved better, she added, asking the board to resign.

Cerelli said she and others would have heard a different story if they had attended past meetings.

"None of you were there.

None of you know what happened," Clyde said. "None of you know the job he has done. None of you know all the things that you are complaining about. Now we all love Mike a lot, but it's our responsibility to have a person in that position that is going to do the job. Whether he's a nice guy or not, he still needs to do the job."

Frank Swedenborg is serving as interim fire chief while the search for a new leader is in progress.

LNG: 'Political concerns are always inherent in processes like this'

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The students analyzed LNG-related letters in local newspapers (including The Daily Astorian) and regulatory documents, and interviewed 45 people who joined in the public processes.

The goal of their ongoing research — guided by Hilary Boudet, an assistant professor in the OSU School of Public Policy — is to improve public participation processes during large-scale industrial develop-

ment on the coast.

They wondered whether residents believe the processes fairly reflect their concerns, and how this belief influences the community's response to LNG projects.

Opponents, the students said, believe they have many opportunities to be informed about the LNG siting process but that their input isn't properly incorporated into the decision-making. Thus, opponents not only attend public meetings but stage protests and ral-

lies to voice their concerns.

Supporters, however, believe public participation processes are dominated by opponents, so they often form alliances with pro-LNG groups to increase support.

"Political concerns are always inherent in processes like this," Gaustad said, "so, in a way, perceptions do matter, because there's always that political concern of who's gaining from something and who's losing from something."

I Am Thankful
This is the time of year when we reflect on our lives and our blessings

There are many that list something they are thankful for each day in November on social media.

On Thanksgiving Day, The Daily Astorian will dedicate a full page in our classified section to the community, allowing a time to share something you are thankful for.

There is a 20 word maximum for each submission. This allows more people to participate.

How to participate:
 email your "I am thankful" to- hlarkins@dailyastorian.com
 or mail to- The Daily Astorian, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103,
 Attn: Holly Larkins **Deadline: November 20th at 5pm.**

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