

# At the PAC, for the PAC

By DENISE REED  
For The Daily Astorian

The PAC refers to the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center on the corner of 16th and Franklin in Astoria.

The building was once a church, then the college bought it and converted it to a performing arts center, housing classes in music, dance and drama, as well as rehearsals and performances.

For years, it was not used for this purpose when the college eliminated its performing arts department. Several community groups have continued to meet and rehearse in the facility.

For a period of time, it has also been used by other college programs and department offices. For the last four to five years, voice and piano courses have been taught there, and students receive college credit for these lessons and for participation in the chorale and orchestra.

Many new residents of the community are unaware of the PAC's present usage and its history as a vibrant facility associated with our college.

The center's partners have revised the facility to be used for what the college initially bought it for.

"Bach Around the Clock," an all-night event the showcased community performing arts, was the first event aimed at raising funds to maintain the facility.

This event came after a ruling the PAC would no longer be an entity of the college with college programs since there was no longer a performing arts department. We were urged to come together to decide if we wanted to continue

our programs (rehearsals and concerts). At one time the college received funds from the government for members of the community who participated in community groups that met at the PAC. This was stopped, I believe when federal and state funds began to dry up.

"Bach Around the Clock" was followed by a revival of the musical "Hitching," by local Brownsmead Flats. Even before these special events, the North Oregon Coast Concert Band, the North Coast Chorale, and the North Oregon Coast Symphony continued to rehearse at the center weekly and held several concerts a year. There were other local community members who also maintained regular concert programming at the PAC, before the college became interested in divesting itself from this facility. When this happened, the group of regular users of the facility stepped up to the plate and was intent on saving the center for rehearsals of community organizations and for affordable concerts for the community.

Since then, there have been several drama productions, individuals from inside and outside the community have performed here in support of keeping the doors open.

This brings us to the fact that the size of the PAC is perfect for small community events, speakers, singers and instrumentalists.

## Writer's Notebook

So what is our — the PAC partners — goal for the center? When we came together originally our goals were set out clearly: to preserve the PAC for rehearsals for all of the volunteer members of the community who played, sang, acted and danced there, and to offer affordable entertaining concerts for the community.

Our long range goals included the offering of music, dance, and drama instruction in some form, filling the void left by the college. Not only the partners, but many scholarly authorities, believe that education in the disciplines of the performing arts is essential for the development of members of a discerning and empathetic society.

We want the PAC to be more than a "community center" but a place where the community can come together and practice, listen to, and perform together. That is the key, not just discussion of problems that may arise in all communities, but working, singing, playing, and performing together. This is what makes a community.



Denise Reed

Through the years since coming to Astoria in 2007, I have heard many stories relating happy memories of happenings at the PAC. Organ lessons and student dance recitals are just a few.

The wife of the former organist at Trinity Lutheran Church, which purchased the organ long before the college bought the church and turned it into a performing arts center, related to me that on Christmas Eve, the church had to hold three services to accommodate

all of the community members who came to this event. Other community members spoke about bringing their children, who are now in their 50s, to brown bag concerts. Many stories abound about those who performed and practiced at the facility as well. Maybe you have a story to tell about your experiences. I would love to hear about them and perhaps compile a book of events through the years at the PAC.

The PAC partners are assessed a fee by the college to practice and perform at the center, consequently each month we are counting beans to make sure this community facility stays above ground. Many of us volunteer in the areas of maintenance and custodial clean up.

It is the perfect space for the community events that occur there, and we would like to keep it as a community venue, just as it is but with necessary upgrades. We need the help of the community for this to happen. Please support our efforts by attending concerts, plays, lectures and other events that are there. Become a sponsor. The PAC building is a part of the community, let's keep it for the community.

*Denise Reed is the director of the North Coast Chorale, an adjunct instructor at Clatsop Community College, sits on the board of the Oregon Humanities and is a special contributor to The Daily Astorian.*



Denise Reed/For The Daily Astorian

The stage at the Performing Arts Center.

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## Open forum

### Support recall

In recent newspaper articles and letters to the editor, the board of directors of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District has repeatedly defended the firing of the chief as a matter of their fiduciary responsibility to the community. Fiduciary responsibility is taking care of another's matters, in this case our public safety. It requires trust, honesty and good faith.

The board has violated its fiduciary responsibility to Mike Balzer by firing him without adequate cause. In doing so, they've also violated their fiducial responsibility to the community, by exposing it to thousands of dollars of extra expense and a wrongful termination lawsuit. Board members continue to dodge their responsibility by continuing their assault on Balzer and his supporters in print and social media.

Many of the letters and articles are based on misinformation, mistruths and plain untruths. Over the past years, Cannon Beach residents have all observed Balzer doing what he was hired for, to protect our community, even as he was being assigned a myriad of extra tasks by board members, without the necessary support to complete them. It is an interesting side note that the board, in its March meeting, voted to fund a matching grant from the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) to hire an intern to assist the chief with his administrative duties.

Cannon Beach voters recently received a mailer signed by the three members facing recall. In it, they claim to have received only six letters from firefighters supporting chief Balzer. At the board meeting of Nov. 9, firefighter Erik Meyer presented a packet containing 18 letters signed by Cannon Beach firefighters questioning the board's actions, and

expressing their support for Balzer. A number of similar letters from community members were also given to the board.

The mailer highlights fire district accomplishments over the past 20 years, all of them completed during Balzer's tenure as firefighter and chief, while ignoring his contributions. The mailer states that the recall will only appease a small group of people not associated with the fire district. I am honored to stand with more than 150 Cannon Beach residents who signed the recall petitions. As Cannon Beach residents and taxpayers, we are all associated with our firefighters.

As a former first responder, I am most proud of our volunteer firefighters and their service, leaving their families and putting their own lives at risk to protect our community. It is well past time for a change in the Cannon Beach RFPD board of directors. Please vote "yes" to support the recall.

ERIC REITER  
Tolovana Park

### Get fluoride out

Having the courage to stand up for your beliefs is something we all strive for. Having the science to support your convictions is equally important, too. When the (pro) fluoride editorial appeared on March 14, I was left wondering how a sensible dialogue regarding the present state of water fluoridation in Astoria could continue ("Thank you LaMear, Price and Warr," *The Daily Astorian*).

I didn't see any research on water fluoridation in the article. Since being diagnosed with hypothyroidism in the mid-1990s, I try and avoid ingestion of fluoride compounds in

such things as water, toothpaste, foodstuffs, etc. One of the latest and largest epidemiological studies in England showed "higher levels of fluoride in drinking water provide a useful contribution for predicting the prevalence of hypothyroidism."

What else do we know about ingesting fluoride? Plenty. The Department of Health and Human Services lowered the recommended level of fluoride in water to .7 mg per liter. Has Astoria done this? Since the typical target of water fluoridation is children, why are we trying to publicly medicate a small group with absolutely no controls in place?

Stick with toothpaste, fluoride treatments, and get it out of our water supply. Councilor Zetty Nemlowill was right in bringing this to the table.

THOMAS OWEN  
Astoria

### No thanks

The news that the grocery store we frequent is being replaced by a brew pub? That is the last thing we need, and will change the fabric of this small but close-knit community. I must say that I am in shock that this has been passed ("Brew pub plan gets conditional go-ahead," *The Daily Astorian*, March 14). It will be like having the firemen's ball 24/7.

It is not in the best interest of the people who live in Gearhart. My husband and I strongly object to this ridiculous approval by members of the Planning Commission. There are more places to get a beer than one can count, so leave Gearhart out.

LIZ AND ED MEANEY  
Gearhart

### Vote no recall

Please vote no on the recall of three Cannon Beach fire board directors. I support the Cannon Beach Fire District Board of Directors, as do the majority of the fire district officers at our last officers' meeting.

In the 10 years I have been a volunteer for the fire department, this board has always been there for us and the district taxpayers. They are very supportive of the fire fighters, and have always made the effort to give us the best equipment and training available.

Recalling three of these directors, and turning control of our district over to the Clatsop County Commissioners, will not benefit the fire department, or the taxpayers of our district. Again, please vote no.

BRIAN SMITH  
Lieutenant, Cannon Beach Fire & Rescue

### Good news?

The news of the great number of visitors to Astoria from cruise ships is quite exciting, and what a great boost for our merchants — however, I wonder if Oregon LNG sets up shop, will the cruise ships still visit us, or just go on by? It is possible they will cross us off their list of ports to visit, and we will lose that added boost to our economy.

Do we really need that big bomb sitting there in our yard, just waiting for a mishap to cause ignition? I wonder if it's really the right thing for us.

DON V. JOHNSON  
Astoria



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