

Mazzarella: Her father, a songwriter, died when she was 18

Continued from Page 1A

Instead, she paints, practices music and gets involved in local causes and activities that mean something to her.

"And I'm good at being poor — so good at being poor," she said, laughing. "I almost prefer it."

Though she grew up solidly middle class, her parents chose to spend much of their extra income on family vacations rather than conventional material luxuries — a habit that Mazzarella carried with her into adulthood.

"I live off so little money to get by because I'm just squirreling it away for plane tickets. And as soon as I have that amount, I just buy the ticket," she said. "That's just sort of how my brain works."

Wanderlust

At 35, Mazzarella has seen an impressive amount of the West-



Submitted Photo

Andrea Mazzarella at the Astoria Regatta in 2013.

em Hemisphere: She's traveled across the U.S. and to Canada, Central America and the Caribbean and Hawaiian islands.

When she attended massage school in Eugene, her intention was to "someday live and work in a beautiful tropical location so I could pretend like I was on vacation all the time."

And so, for several years, she worked as a massage therapist on the Hawaiian island of Kauai.

World travel is one experience, she said, that helps her become more aware of the beauty and impermanence of the present moment.

"It's easier for me to stay in the moment when I'm traveling

because I feel like it's this time that I don't take for granted. It's not just my regular life — it's vacation. So I can go sit in a coffee shop when I'm on vacation or traveling, and it's just the richest experience — every color, every person that walks by, the smells, everything. I'm fully in it," she said. "I want to live like that all the time, but I'm not good at living like that all the time."

"But when I'm traveling, I just get into that zone."

Early on in her excursions abroad, she began noticing the universals, the common denominators of humanity. Wherever she went, people went out for coffee (or their culture's equivalent), played with their kids and did their best to have good days.

"Even if there's things that seem vastly different, there's still just basic things about humans that are all kind of the same — wanting the same things and

wanting to relate to each other," she said.

Like father, like daughter

By fits and starts, Mazzarella has been working on a project that, if she can pull it off, will be a powerful and poignant achievement.

Her father, a songwriter, died of cancer in 1999 when Mazzarella was 18. Among the possessions she inherited from him are his acoustic guitar and a notebook full of his songs with the chords written above the lyrics.

Mazzarella — a singer who dabbles in piano, guitar, ukulele, bass and drums — has been trying to rework some of those songs, hoping to record and perform them one day.

"I don't know the melodies that he sang. I know that he was really into folk and country and blues," she said. "I could try to strum the guitar and try to sing them in a way that he did, but I

don't know what that sounded like. So it's me just seeing the chords and the words, and I can make up the melody within that framework."

It's a pretty heavy pastime, she said. Many of her father's songs are quite personal, touching not just on places he lived and women he loved but his very philosophy of life.

"There's songs about searching for meaning within his life and feeling really lost, and I feel like, in a lot of ways, I relate so much to him," she said.

Unable to talk about such things with her father, Mazzarella feels as if she's getting to know him on an entirely new level, through the art he left behind.

And when the father-daughter collaboration is finished, she plans to name the album after a line he wrote on an otherwise blank page: "Ain't dead yet."

— Erick Bengel

Berdes: 'John dedicated his life to helping those around him'

Continued from Page 1A

His partnership with Paul Benoit, the former city manager and community development director, to help transform a brownfield at the old Astoria Plywood Cooperative into the Mill Pond housing project led to one of the city's signature achievements.

"No bank wanted to touch a contaminated site," Benoit recalled in a text message. He said Berdes "immediately got it. He understood what the project meant to Astoria and he intuitively understood that it had a possibility for transformational change."

After the plywood mill closed in 1989, costing the city

jobs and leaving an environmental challenge, it took several years for city planners to come up with a redevelopment strategy for the east side. The city's Gateway plan covered the mill and the former fairgrounds and eventually led to the Astoria Aquatic Center, the Oregon State University Seafood Lab and the movie theater.

Benoit described Berdes as "amazingly intelligent and intuitive. He also had a very big heart. He helped people — neighbors and others in the region — reworking loan terms to assist a borrower in distress or, at times, providing quiet assistance from his own means to help neighbors."

Greg Hamann, the former president of Clatsop Community College, called Berdes "a friend that I valued and loved dearly."

"And beyond — or perhaps because of — that friendship, John was soon to become a critical contributor to the complex funding amalgam that constituted the financial foundation for the reconstruction of the Clatsop Community College campus."

Hamann said Berdes introduced him to the federal New Market Tax Credit program as a source of funding for college improvements. The college was able to build Columbia Hall and renovate other buildings with the help of Craft3.

"None of this would have

happened without John's patience, persistence, and commitment to Clatsop College and the Clatsop County community, for which I am eternally grateful," Hamann said.

Steve Forrester, the editor and publisher of The Daily Astorian and the founding president of Liberty Restoration Inc., said Berdes was the nonprofit's bridge to the Meyer Memorial Trust, which helped underwrite improvements to the Liberty Theater.

"John was key to helping Liberty obtain one of Meyer's first loans at a key moment in the restoration," Forrester said in an email.

Berdes, who lived in Seattle, earned his bachelor's degree in

urban studies from Oberlin College in Ohio. He was a community coordinator for the Capitol Hill Community Council in Seattle, the founding executive director of Capitol Hill Housing, and senior program director for the Local Initiatives Support Corp.

He joined Craft3 — then called ShoreBank — in 1995, a year after the nonprofit was created. Craft3 is a community development financial institution that provides loans and other assistance to people and businesses that may not have access to traditional financing.

The nonprofit has invested about \$390 million in Oregon and Washington state, including

more than \$48 million in Clatsop County and Pacific County through 328 loans.

"We have lost a leader, a mentor, and a friend — but John left in his wake a strong organization and legacy," Steve McConnell, the chairman of the Craft3 board of directors, said in a statement. "Craft3 has the impact it has because John was strong, determined, deeply thoughtful, and frequently brilliant."

"John dedicated his life to helping those around him, and the greater Craft3 and community development families will miss him terribly. We ask that you keep his family in your thoughts."

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