

# KMUN: Station plagued by murky finance reports, revenue shortfall

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Change is not an uncommon word tossed around these days at community radio stations, which are experiencing multiple transitions and even funding threats. Despite a consultant's recent warning that it may not survive another decade, those who work and volunteer at the 34-year-old station are defiant.

"We all went, 'Well, no way. We're not going to let that happen,'" Rideout said.

## Better reports

The station was plagued by murky finance reports, a revenue shortfall and a lack of members when Rideout — who has been with the station as a staffer or volunteer for 15 years — took over. Since then, the station has been able to present more financial reports of its nearly \$500,000 budget to its board. Staff wages have risen, and the station pays more for NPR programming.

"We don't have to figure out whether to buy milk or eggs. We can buy milk and eggs," Rideout said.

Rideout hired staffers such as Development Director Susan Peterson, who was tasked with boosting the station's marketing presence. Overall, she has created a more stable and harmonious staff, Nystrom said.

"The cultural of personal interaction is probably one of your biggest achievements," Nystrom told Rideout as they sat for an interview recently at the headquarters — Astoria's Tillicum House on 14th Street. "It's a happy family here, and I don't think it was before."

## More original stories

Now, Rideout, 64, will return to her true passion. In her journalism career, she has been a Coast River Business Journal reporter, a freelancer and reporter at the station. She has also filled the void left by Brewster's departure.

"The more I did that, the more I realize that this was where my heart was at this



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian  
Graham Nystrom, left, and Joanne Rideout outside the Coast Community Radio station in Astoria. They will assume new roles at the station beginning in November.

point," she said.

Rideout hopes the station will be able to report more original stories as she transitions into her new role.

"One of the things that's really important to keep us viable is local news, because we're competing with so much else," she said. "But one of the things that nobody else can outdo us at is talking about our own hometown."

## Stepping up

Meanwhile, the promotion of Nystrom, 39, represents an attempt by the station to attract younger listeners and members. Rideout also recalled

her own hiring process, which took nearly a year before she was promoted from within the organization.

"What I really wanted was someone who understands KMUN and Coast Community Radio, somebody who has the heart for it and the wisdom to run it," she said. "It needs to embrace a new generation of listeners."

Rideout approached Nystrom to gauge his interest in potentially assuming her position someday. His 14-year career as a technician includes experience as a live sound and recording engineer for bands and venues, along with stints

at Live Wire Radio and Oregon Public Broadcasting.

"I'm genuinely passionate about electronics and gear the way Joanne is passionate about news," Nystrom said.

The hiring of a new operations manager who also specializes in technology, Brian Bovenizer, could allow the station to more rapidly update its equipment — including its emergency generator and workstations in production studios.

"There's, kind of, always a certain amount of gear that's getting long in the tooth, because there's a lot of gear involved," Nystrom said. "I

think there are just a lot of complementary skill sets that are all coming together and, sort of, reinvigorating the ship."

While programming and content will remain largely the same, Nystrom hopes to ease listeners' access to content through a streaming service and podcasts. He also hopes to expand the organization's internship program, currently centered on music, to include opportunities in journalism and technology.

"There's going to be an effort to expand the mediums through which we access our listeners," Nystrom said. "There are no big, sweeping

changes planned. It's more a matter of, just, being as responsive as possible to what our members' feedback is."

## Federal funding

One issue Nystrom may have to grapple with is a potential loss of federal funding. President Donald Trump's proposed budget earlier this year called for cuts that would eliminate more than 20 percent of the station's budget.

While the station staffers expressed concern at the time, they now are cautiously optimistic.

"At the moment, apparently, there are even people of the conservative mindset who believe in public media and don't want to get rid of it," Rideout said. "There isn't a whole lot of political will to get rid of public media right now."

Nystrom noted, though, that the station is not completely sheltered from an "unpredictable political environment." Should the station lose the money, it would need to increase revenue from underwriting, membership and grants.

Janet Fryberger, the station's new membership specialist and volunteer coordinator, will play a role on some of those fronts.

If its situation becomes dire enough, the station may need to cut NPR programming.

"Nobody feels like we can really lose any of it," Nystrom said. "It's generally acknowledged that a big part of public and community radio stations is the emergency alert system."

Like other managers throughout the station's history, Nystrom will attempt to grow the station and handle issues both old and new.

"It's a stewardship thing. This station doesn't really belong to any of us. It belongs to all of us," Rideout said. "I sort of saw my role as almost like the steward of a park. It's a community resource and I had my turn. This was my turn, and now it's Graham's turn."

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

### Oregon man charged with arson for summer wildfire

GRANTS PASS — An arson charge has been filed against a southern Oregon man accused of igniting wildfires.

Authorities say 60-year-old David Ross Callaway started three separate blazes near Galice in August.

Karl Witz of the Oregon Department of Forestry said two of the fires were small, but one spread to 40 acres before an air attack stopped it.

Callaway has yet to enter a plea and court records don't list an attorney to speak on his behalf.

A conditional release order forbids the Grants Pass man from possessing matches, lighters or other fire-starting materials. He's due back in court Nov. 15.

Police and prosecutors have not said how the fires were set.

Though humans cause many wildfires, an arson charge is rare because it requires intent.

### 3 boys arrested in Creswell mill fire

CRESWELL — Three teenage boys are accused of starting the fire at a Creswell mill Sunday night, and they are suspected of starting at least three other fires in Creswell during the past month.

A 16-year-old and two 13-year-olds were booked into the Lane County Juvenile Justice Center on Wednesday, charged with first-degree arson, second-degree arson, first-degree criminal mischief, reckless burning, first-degree burglary and second-degree burglary.

The 16-year-old might be charged as an adult because of his age and because first-degree arson is a Measure 11 offense.

The names of the teenagers have not been released because of their ages.

The fire started just before 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Fore Lumber LLC, 82946 Butte Road.

Lane County sheriff's deputies evacuated a nearby home and provided traffic control as South Lane Fire and Rescue battled the blaze.

### JFK Files: Thousands released but Trump holds back others

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has blocked the release of hundreds of records on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, bending to CIA and FBI appeals, while the National Archives came out Thursday night with a hefty cache of others.

"I have no choice," Trump said in a memo, citing "potentially irreversible harm" to national security if he were to allow all records to come out now. He placed those files under a six-month review while letting 2,800 others come out, racing a deadline to honor a law mandating their release.

The documents approved for release and made public late Thursday capture the frantic days after the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination, during which federal agents madly chased after tips, however thin, juggled rumors and sifted through leads worldwide.

They include cables, notes and reports stamped "Secret" that reveal the suspicions of the era — around Cubans and Communists. They cast a wide net over varied activities of the Kennedy administration, such as its covert efforts to upend Fidel Castro's government in Cuba.

For historians, it's a chance to answer lingering questions, put some unfounded conspiracy theories to rest, perhaps give life to other theories.

### Pentagon chief Mattis stresses diplomacy in Korean crisis

PANMUNJOM, Korea — On his first visit to the tense but eerily quiet frontier between North and South Korea as U.S. secretary of defense, Jim Mattis conveyed the message he hopes will win the day: Diplomacy is the answer to ending the nuclear crisis with the North, not war.

He made the point over and over — at the Panmunjom "truce village" where North literally meets South; at a military observation post inside the Demilitarized Zone, and in off-the-cuff comments to U.S. and South Korean troops.

"We're doing everything we can to solve this diplomatically — everything we can," he told the troops after alighting from a Black Hawk helicopter that had ferried him to and from the border some 25 miles north of central Seoul.

"Ultimately, our diplomats have to be backed up by strong soldiers and sailors, airmen and Marines," he added, "so they speak from a position of strength, of combined strength, of alliance strength, shoulder to shoulder."

At Panmunjom, where the armistice ending the Korean war was signed in July 1953, Mattis quoted Secretary of State Rex Tillerson as saying, "Our goal is not war." The aim, he said, is to compel the North to completely and irreversibly eliminate a nuclear weapons program.

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