

STEIGNER

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announce the award. Nominations are accepted on behalf of elementary, middle, high school and college music teachers in every facet of music education - including band, choral, orchestral, and more.

"This is a huge honor for Mark, and a formal recognition of the impact Mr. Steighner has had on the music community in the Gorge and beyond," Polkinghorn said.

"I am humbled and very appreciative to be honored," Steighner said. "I especially appreciate the effort that Rebecca Nederhiser took to nominate me and gather the letters of support," he said. "I know that there are many, many hard working music educators that deserve it more than I do." Nederhiser is the music teacher at Hood River Middle School, and now has a Steighner script in production for debut on Feb. 27.

(See sidebar for more details on "The Girl Who Lived With The Bears" and other upcoming Steighner projects.)

Steighner has been teaching in Hood River since 1979. He began teaching choral and instrumental music at Hood River Valley High School in 1984. During his tenure, he has directed 50 musicals at the high school and in the community, including eight original musicals. His ensembles have commissioned over 20 new pieces. His choirs and/or bands have qualified for the state contest every year since 1988 and he has taken his ensembles to Europe eight times. Steighner also directs the community orchestra and choir while also teaching music for Columbia Gorge Community College.

"The Hood River County School District congratulates Mr. Steighner on receiving this award and is grateful for his years of service to the students of the district," Polkinghorn told



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

STUDENTS CONCENTRATE on a challenging part of Rheinberger's "Abendlied" as Mark Steighner directs from the piano.

What's next in the world of Mark Steighner?

The HRMS musical "The Girl Who Lived With the Bears," which Steighner said is "very loosely adapted" from a Native American folk tale. It opens Feb. 27. Steighner wrote the script, the ninth performance locally of his own music. These included, from 2008-13, a trilogy of full-scale musicals.

The rest of this year will be a very busy time for Steighner. In addition to school responsibilities, there are orchestra and Voci performances (related item on page A3) and a brand new summer festival being organized by the Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association, with headliner Storm Large playing with the orchestra on June 28.

In Fall, Voci choir and orchestra will perform the Beethoven 9th and the opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors". Also, this summer Steighner will direct "Next to Normal" for CAST. Auditions will be in late March.

the board.

Directors Bob Danko and Jan Veldhuisen Virk, whose daughters participated in Steighner ensembles and productions from the 1990s onward, both praised Steighner for his impact on local youth.

Steighner, 58, took on Sinfonietta directorship in 2005, and founded Voci a couple of years later. A child of teachers, he graduated from University of California at Santa Barbara. Mark and Hillary's son, Erik, is a music professor at University of the Puget Sound. He's held every imaginable musical leadership in Hood River in the past 34 years, with Chamber Singers, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, and the rock

band Spectrum since starting with the schools in 1980.

He's also directed church and middle school choirs, and written music for a number of productions including his trio of musicals (staged between 2008-2013): "Ballad of the Pirate Queen;" "Avalon: A Steampunk Romance;" and "Reach4It!" — different genres and settings that all dealt with human issues of tolerance, acceptance and community.

Steighner's honors include Great Teacher Honoree from Hood River Schools in 1989, Teacher of the Year in 1993 from Hood River Rotary and Sprint (now CenturyLink) and the first Hood River Arts in Education Award in 2013.

Rotary Ski Day returns Jan. 19 at Meadows

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**
News editor

The best deal on skiing you'll find all year will be Jan. 19 at Mt. Hood Meadows.

The occasion is the annual Rotary Ski Day, for all the skiing you can do from 2-9 p.m.

The price is \$15 in advance, \$20 at the gate.

"We've got our fingers crossed for snow this weekend and it looks like we're going to get some," said Rotary president Craig Ortega. "It's one of our largest fundraisers of the year and really makes it possible for us to provide as much as \$40,000 a year in high school and college scholarship, and to donate money to

other community projects and organizations."

In addition to the skiing, Rotary brings in singer-comedian Joe Stoddard for a show from 6-9 p.m. Food and drink is available for sale at the various Meadows outlets at the resort.

To purchase your Rotary pass go to: skihood.com/schedulesandevents

Regular tickets and season passes will be in effect until 4 p.m., but after that you need a Rotary ticket to use the lifts on Jan. 19.

"It's a wonderful partnership with Meadows that has evolved over the years from

when they used to give us an obscure Monday in January and we were responsible to sell tickets," said Ski Day coordinator Michael Schock.

"Today, Meadows handles all of the ticket sales for us," he said.

"It's open to everyone, and we encourage the public to come up since it's on MLK observance, with kids out of school. The price point is very attractive," Schock said.

"It's a fundraiser where people have a lot of fun," Ortega said. "We get a lot of Rotarians from out of the area and college students who like to come because it's on a three-day weekend."

NESTLE

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tive regulatory approach," after which Nestlé brought it to the attention of the city and ODFW "as a possible way to reduce staff time and resources currently being spent by these and other agencies on the water exchange, owing to the administrative challenges posed by opponents of our company."

According to a staff report from the city of Cascade Locks, the cross transfer is projected to be quicker than the exchange, now taking an anticipated two years instead of four. The report notes that despite the changes "this process continues to allow for public input."

However, Julia DeGraw, Northwest organizer for Food and Water Watch, says that while the public can still comment on the application, by proposing a water exchange instead of a water rights cross transfer, the city and ODFW applications no longer have to go through something called a public interest review, which according to Kepler, requires the application to pass more "tests" before it is approved. DeGraw criticized the cross transfer of water rights as a way for the city of Cascade Locks and ODFW to circumvent that process.

"Our initial reaction is that

we're disappointed," she said. "It really looks like they are trying to evade the public interest review. It discounts the thousands of Oregonians that have already weighed in on the (water) exchange."

Racquel Rancier, senior policy coordinator for the Oregon Water Resources Department, was contacted to discuss the public interest review process, but was unable to be reached by press time.

When asked if her group planned to file a formal protest against the cross transfer, DeGraw said Food and Water Watch was still reviewing its options.

"We don't know exactly what the process looks like, but we'll weigh in wherever we can," she noted and added that "You can anticipate we're going to (protest) it again if there is any kind of legal standing we can have."

And if that does happen, Kepler acknowledged that a successful protest would be more difficult to mount due to the different approval standards for a cross transfer than an exchange.

"To protest a transfer you have to show an injury to a water right," he explained. "At least in the current transfer, that's hard to do because it's all taking place on our property and there is no intervening water right."

Kepler also confirmed that the cross transfer would not be subject to a public interest review and said "whether we

should be cutting that out or not" was one of the aspects of the cross transfer that ODFW was currently examining. And although the city of Cascade Locks has filed an application for a "permanent" water right transfer, Kepler added ODFW has examined establishing an agreement with the city that would allow for the transfer to be undone if necessary, as well as creating a stipulation that would prevent ODFW from having to pay the costs of piping the water to and from the city.

"We want to make sure that we're held whole, essentially," he said.

Kepler explained the transfer would be beneficial to the fish hatchery because it would allow the facility to keep the sockeye salmon it raises there for a longer period. Currently, when the hatchery does not have enough water during low flow periods, the fish have to be shipped to other hatcheries, which involves extra transportation costs for ODFW.

However, Kepler noted that the fish were never the prime focus for the water swap, which he said had been championed by former Governor Ted Kulongoski as a way to boost the economy of Cascade Locks.

"This has always been about economic development for Cascade Locks," Kepler said. "That's the major impetus for this, not 'ODFW thinks this is a good idea to do this.'"

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