

Keeping arts and culture alive

Coalition awards grants to eight nonprofits

By Erick Bengel
EO Media Group

Lovers of the arts often face an agonizing trade-off when they move from big cities to smaller, more remote towns, like those along the Oregon Coast: They lose the smog and noise and congestion, yes, but they may also lose the abundant opportunities to enjoy and engage in the arts.

That’s what happened to Cindy Flood in her younger years when she moved from a Los Angeles suburb to southern Oregon.

Flood — now the founder and president of the Peninsula Association of Performing Artists in Ocean Park, Washington — told her story at the annual Clatsop County Cultural Coalition Awards Ceremony, held Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Liberty Theater.

The coalition, part of the Oregon Cultural Trust, awarded a total of \$10,595 in grant funding to eight nonprofit organizations that enhance the culture, enrich the humanities and preserve the heritage of the county.

Hosted by coalition co-chairwoman Charlene Larsen, the evening began with Flood’s speech on how to keep the arts alive — especially in places where arts may already be hard to come by — and continued with Astoria High School’s Port City Singers, who sang Christmas carols conducted by teacher Matt Pierce.

Flood reminded attendees that, although it is easy to take the coast’s rich cultural offerings for granted, it could have turned out very differently if certain people hadn’t resolved to create them.

If Flood was “going to have my cake and eat it, too — if I was going to have the beauty of creation around me and live in a very pristine environment,” then she would have to see to it herself, she discovered.

Because the arts can’t survive on their own. “It was up to me,” she said. “I had to make it happen.”

The coalition’s grantees make the arts and culture happen here, and because they do, North Coast residents — somewhat re-



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

Grant recipients stand for a photo after the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition awards ceremony at the Liberty Theater Dec. 10.

moved from the cultural cornucopia of a metropolis — are less likely to feel shortchanged.

Grantees

- Little Ballet Theatre Inc. received \$2,000 for the North Coast Dance Camp. The check, accepted by board members Gloria Van de Hey and Catherine Anderson, will go toward guest instructor fees for dancers to present the summer dance camp.
- North Coast Chorale received \$2,000 for May performances of Karl Jenkins’ “The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace.” The check, accepted by chorale representative Phyllis Taylor, will go toward the orchestral accompaniment.
- Seaside Museum & Historical Society received \$2,000 for the preservation and enhancement of the Seaside Museum & Butterfield Cottage. The check, accepted by board president Steve Wright, will go toward the prep work, painting and supplies needed to refurbish the exterior of the museum.



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

The Port City Singers perform during the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition awards ceremony at the Liberty Theater Thursday.

- Knappa School District received \$1,600 for a Scandinavian mural project. The check, accepted by Leila Collier, principal of Hilda Lahti Elementary School, will go toward supplies for shop and art students to design and complete a mural backdrop to be displayed at the Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.
- Astoria High School received \$800 for the Astoria High School Literary

Review. The check, accepted by teacher and author Matt Love, will go toward the printing costs for 250 copies of a bound student literary project that showcases student work: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, illustration and art.

Partners for the PAC (Pacific Arts Center) received \$750 for a live theater performance of Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot.” The check, accepted by co-chair Constance



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

Steve Wright, president of the Seaside Historical Society Museum, left, accepts a grant from Sirpa Duoos, right, during the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition awards ceremony at the Liberty Theater Thursday. The grant will go toward preservation and enhancement of the Seaside Butterfield Museum.

Waisanen, will go toward the play’s production costs.

Clatsop Care Memory Community received \$750 for a show called “Music for the Spirit.” The check, accepted by administrator Mindy Stokes, will go toward six concerts of live music for residents of the facility.

Maritime Archaeological Society received \$695

for the Maritime Cultural Heritage ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) Project. The check, accepted by Jennifer Kozik, the secretary and grant writer, will go toward matching funds to purchase the vehicle, which will document underwater artifacts testifying to the region’s cultural heritage in the Columbia River and coastal waters.

FOOD REVIEW

MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA



Big Wave Cafe

Manzanita eatery big on skills and sources, light on surprises



PHOTO BY MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Hot Club House sandwich featured a long, pink ham steak that flopped out like a panting tongue.

wiches. He recommended the Fried Halibut (\$13.95,) and said he liked to add avocado to his (another \$2). He was right.

The halibut sandwich arrived tall like a tower, stacked teetering like a bistro burger. It felt like a shame to smush it down flat enough to where I could get my mouth around it, but when I did I was ecstatic. The fish — a thick steak from Astoria — was excellently cooked, the breading crunchy, the innards soft and steaming hot. The tartar was sprinkled bright with dill and lemon. A whole cross-section of onion added a crisp snap, the tomato a pang of sweetness, and the avocado a smooth, heavy cream. Indeed, the addition of that avocado balanced the sandwich so

ideally I wonder why it isn’t on the menu. With it I had the clam chowder (which added another \$2.50 to the base price). With firm cubes of potato and a fine amount of clams that weren’t too rubbery, it was warming, without flourish, and wholly traditional.

I returned on a Saturday night, and the place was bustling, full of families at big tables. Up-tempo dance music played loudly over the stereo, and I found it an odd mix. A little Taylor Swift with your crab cakes? How about Cher? “Do you be-lieeeeeeeve in life after love?”

The crab cakes (\$16 a la carte or \$22.95 as a dinner entrée) were indeed fitting of something grandma would make. They were hearty and comforting, more easygoing

than bold. The two hockey puck-sized cakes came with a smoky-sweet chipotle sauce and pinch of seaweed salad. They were bready and soft with a nice crust, full of crab and a bit of veggie crispness.

I also had an oyster shooter, though I’d have preferred one on the shell. It was enormous, almost too big to chomp and slurp in one fell swoop. (To be sure: smaller oysters are prized and preferred for raw consumption. The big ones are better for frying.)

The rest of the seafood menu failed to hook me. I saw daily specials like salmon, and I passed. Something about simply grilled fish, steamed veggies and a baked potato sounded more like a meal for dieting or triathlon prep than something you pay \$25 for on a weekend. Nothing wrong with it. Good to be healthy, eat well, all that. But you can’t say it’s exciting. I was drawn instead by the sandwiches.

The Hot Club House (\$11.95) more resembled a sub than its namesake. The Big Wave replaces the pointless three slices of bread with a ciabatta roll. Extending beyond the bread longways was a long, pink ham steak that flopped out like a panting tongue. Despite the abundance of ham, bacon was added, with cheese melted atop. Along for the ride were lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo, along with a garden of jalapeños (hence the “hot” moniker). Against the cheese, the fatty, salty meats and mayo, I appreciated the briny zip of the peppers, and eventually they had my cheeks welling up.

The Perfect Reuben (\$10.50)

Big Wave Cafe

822 Laneda Ave., Manzanita
oregonsbigwavecafe.com
503-368-9283

RATING: ★ ★ ★ ↓

HOURS: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

PRICE: \$\$ – Entrées range from \$10 to \$25

SERVICE: Warm, fun

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN OPTIONS: Few

DRINKS: Wine, beer, coffee, tea, juice

also added bacon, though for the life of me I can’t tell why. The only reasons I can come up with are cynical: that people are suckers for bacon being added or that the Big Wave wants to expedite my coronary bypass. Whatever the motive, the addition of bacon to the Reuben is essentially meaningless as it’s nearly impossible to detect under a solid inch or more of thickly sliced corned beef. My server and I joked about “perfect” being in the Reuben’s name, but in a way it’s true. The sandwich is big, a kind of half now, half later portion. The bread was nicely toasted, and melted Swiss cheese on both top and bottom sealed it from getting soggy. Sauerkraut spilled out the sides, and the thousand island provided a leavening sweetness. Indeed, it was probably the best Reuben I’ve had on the coast.

But it’s still a Reuben. Which is really good — just not overly exciting. Same goes for the Big Wave. The skills and the sources are apparent. The only thing missing is surprise.