

# From doo-wop to today, choir is on the rise

By Katherine Lacaze  
For Seaside Signal

Thanks to Seaside High School seniors Taylor Carson and Holly Snook, the choir will once again be putting on a winter musical revue to entertain the public and raise money for their program.

The revue will take place at 7 p.m. Jan. 17 at the high school's cafeteria/auditorium and feature songs from throughout the past several decades, from the 1950s to the 2000s. The selection includes "Rockin' Robin" and "Man in the Mirror" by Michael Jackson; "The Boys are Back in Town" by Thin Lizzy; "Single Ladies" by Beyonce; and "Waterfalls" by TLC.

Unlike the choir's three performance concerts, held at the end of each trimester and featuring classic choral music, the musical revue is geared more toward entertainment, featuring dancing, theatrics, and costumes, Carson said.

Choir teacher Kimber Parker agreed, adding, "Musical revues are straight-up pop, really fun to watch."

## Creating a bond

The choir put on musical revues for a few years under the previous choir director, Vanessa Rush. After missing last year, Snook and Carson were determined to bring back the tradition, organizing the event as their joint Pacifica Project.

When they were underclassmen, they felt the musical revue helped them mature as performers, grow closer to their classmates, and learn to be comfortable in their own skin.

"It really opens you up



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Seaside High School choir director Kimber Parker leads the students in song during class.

while having a lot of fun," Snook said.

Carson, who said she was shy as a freshman, believes having a mixture of grade levels helps the older students set a positive example for the younger ones.

"We get taught how to come out of our shells and love ourselves a little more at an early stage, because we have older kids who have already been through the process," she said. "It's nice to be a senior now, and I'm like, 'OK, I need to step up to the plate and start to get close to these kids and teach them it's OK to be themselves.'"

Parker also thinks of the musical revue as a team-building experience for the choir students, particularly ahead of competition season. The choir has "grown exponentially," she said, from 37 students last school year to 65 this year.

"It will be a really good way to create a bond, and that will make us stronger going into the rest of the year," Parker said. "Kids are going to trust each other after this."

All the choir students participate in some capacity, primarily by performing but also working backstage, providing technical support, or running

the snack bar during intermission. Former Seaside student Anita Barbic, who attends Clatsop Community College, is helping Snook and Carson with choreography. Students also plan to conduct a drawing for audience members to win the prize of sitting on a couch at the front of the auditorium during the musical revue.

## Building confidence

The choir is getting prepared for competition season in other ways, as well. Last season, they performed well, making it to the state competition where they excelled at sight-reading.

"We're much farther along this year than we were last year," Parker said. "We're better this year."

Carson agreed, adding she feels the students collectively have a stronger grasp on all the components of music, including theory and technique.

A main aspect of Parker's teaching philosophy is helping the students thoroughly understand music. She focuses on sight-reading, vocal technique, and emoting.

"I want to turn kids into independent musicians, so they can get a piece of music and know what to do with it," she said.

## Going green at the high school

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students who have developmental disabilities. They are with her two to five periods per day depending on their individual education plans. Botkins provides academic support for reading, math, and language arts but also teaches the students practical life skills, such as preparing food, doing laundry, and other means of caring for themselves after school.

"I was looking for different ways to teach the kids," Botkins said. "I thought the garden would be a great place to teach them some of those things and the academics they have to learn."



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