

# College board races focus on challenges

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Astorian

Enrollment is at the heart of the May election for the Clatsop Community College Board of Education.

The three candidates vying to unseat incumbents believe concrete plans and on-the-ground outreach are needed to rebuild student numbers and the community's trust in a world severely altered by the coronavirus pandemic. All three said they were asked to run by people in the community, including college board member Tim Lyman.

But the incumbents argue that institutional knowledge and proven experience working with the college's president, faculty, staff and programs are needed more than ever as the college figures out what role it will play in a post-pandemic landscape.

Clatsop Community College lost more than half of its student population last fall, according to state data. Across Oregon, community colleges saw similar declines. Clatsop lost a number of students because of pandemic-related restrictions and decisions by outside agencies and groups and expects to see many of these students return.

But opinions are mixed among college board members and board hopefuls about how dire the enrollment situation is and what is needed to address it.

At a recent meeting, the college board discussed the drop in enrollment and the pandemic's role. Chris Breitmeyer, the college president, intends to bring a plan to increase enrollment before the board this spring. The college also plans to ramp up marketing and outreach to attract more students.

Lyman and the candidates he recruited for the May 18 ballot believe more is needed. Meanwhile, Robert Duehmig and other board members have said in meetings this year that though they are concerned about the drop in enrollment, it isn't something that causes them to panic. They believe the college continues to provide attractive offerings and is moving in the right direction to encourage students to return.

"Our job is not to figure out how to do things," said Dave Zunkel, who was appointed to the college board in 2019 and is running for election against a former college employee, Suzanne Iverson.

"Our job," Zunkel said, "is to hold the president, our only employee, accountable for what happens at the college, to support him in his role and what he does, but to hold him accountable."



**Robert Duehmig**      **Trudy Van Dusen Citovic**

## Duehmig vs. Van Dusen Citovic

The college board is a policy board. Its main role is budgetary and to hire or fire the president, noted Duehmig, who is running for reelection to a four-year term in his Zone 2, Position 3 seat against challenger Trudy Van Dusen Citovic, the co-owner of Van Dusen Beverages and the daughter of former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen.

Duehmig is the interim director for the Oregon Office of Rural Health. Going forward, he said the college needs to better look at how it can meet students where they are. The college recently opened a community food bank on campus, but the pandemic highlighted numerous social inequities, as well as the challenges many students face when it comes to affording school, finding child care or balancing work and family life with college courses.

Now, with colleges across the country offering even more flexibility and online options, Clatsop must find ways to remain competitive.

"We have to be able to adapt to what (students) are looking for," Duehmig said.

Van Dusen Citovic is the owner of Fire Station Yoga and co-owner of The Rosebriar, both in Astoria.

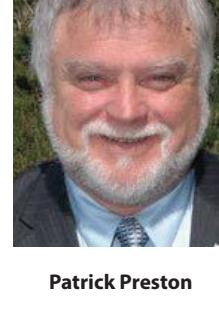
She has served on the Friends of the Astoria Column board and Astoria's traffic safety committee. In addition to her own business undertakings, she works for the family business, Van Dusen Beverages, and previously

worked as a real estate broker, in corporate strategy for PepsiCo and as a management consultant.

Van Dusen Citovic, who speaks Spanish and has volunteered as a bilingual resource at Astor Elementary School, also sees an opportunity for more outreach and programming aimed at Hispanic communities, as well as increased collaboration with the organizations that serve them.



**Sara Meyer**



**Patrick Preston**

## Meyer vs. Preston

In the Zone 2, Position 2 race, incumbent Sara Meyer faces challenger Patrick Preston for a four-year term.

Meyer, who is retired, worked with job corps and community action in New Jersey and Astoria and co-owned The Compleat Photographer in Astoria. She previously served on the Astoria School District board and, in the late 1990s, sat on the college board during a time of transition at the institution.

The digital world was becoming more and more of a reality and the board was being asked to approve significant software purchases that soon became outdated. She feels the college is more intentional now about where it puts its money. Still, she called the college's Campus-Nexus a "two-year nightmare."

Preston has worked with the college and its programs in several capacities. He volunteered to teach the transitional assistance program for the U.S. Coast Guard at the college for four years and was the local veterans employment representative in Astoria. He worked with state senators and representatives to provide services to veterans and helped build the veterans center at the college.

His top priorities if elected are to help the college better understand the physical constraints post-pandemic.

"Our environment has changed and how are we working to meet those needs as well as the needs of our students?" he said.



**David Zunkel**



**Suzanne Iverson**

## Zunkel vs. Iverson

For the Zone 3, Position 6 seat, incumbent David Zunkel is running against challenger Suzanne Iverson for a two-year unexpired term.

Zunkel, a retired physician, has served on the board since 2019. When he was appointed, he made a commitment to run for election to complete the two years remaining on the term.

"I just think community college is a great place to put my time to help students of all levels achieve the sort of education they wish to achieve," he said. "So anything I can do to assist in that process and make it more available or affordable, easier, I'm all for doing it."

"As a board, we have to hold the president accountable and the president needs to hold the vendor accountable for making the improvement that they know have to be made to get us working well," he said.

Iverson worked at the college for 18 years in the community education and workforce training department. During her time, she saw the rise in the use of computers and the expansion of the college facilities on the hill.

Her two daughters both obtained associate degrees from the college.

"I guess my heart has always been at the community college," Iverson said.

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## OBITUARIES

### Helen Alison Gronquist

Seaside

Jan. 18, 1947 — April 19, 2021



Helen Alison Gronquist was the daughter of Canadian immigrants, Archibald and Elsie Whiteford, and grew up in Gresham.

After graduating from Gresham High School, she attended the University of Puget Sound, where she was a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority.

After receiving her degree from the University of Oregon, she moved to Wisconsin. Later returning to Oregon, she became a successful benefits insurance broker in the greater Portland area.

Upon retirement, she and her husband, Roy, moved to Gearhart, then settled in Seaside. Loving travel, she and Roy toured 15 countries. Their Wisconsin trips to visit her two sons and their families were her favorite.

Helen's most rewarding

community involvement was her participation as a foundation board member of the Seaside branch of the American Association of University Women. Her role was interviewing and interacting with prospective scholarship recipients, and the highlight, for her, was then witnessing them being rewarded.

An avid reader, Helen also enjoyed the camaraderie, luncheons and discussions with her local book club.

Helen's family was important to her beyond measure. She was loving and caring to all.

She is survived by her devoted husband of 21 years, Roy Gronquist; her sisters and "partners in crime," Heather McDonald, of Gearhart, and Ann Lucia, of Portland; her sons and their families in Wisconsin, Brandon

and Donna Esser and Morgan and Jamie Esser; and Roy's daughters, Melissa Grey and Amy Baker, and their families.

Helen cherished her beloved grandchildren, Maddy, Grant, Brooklyn, Noah, Eli, Simon, Betsy, Graham and Sophie. She was also a proud aunt to her nieces and nephews.

Her positive outlook, steadfastness, infectious giggle and her smile just for you will be missed by all who knew her.

### Terrie Chesnut

Scottsville, Virginia

June 20, 1960 — April 22, 2021



"I saw the end of the road ahead / Yet I did not stop to tarry more / But steadfastly continued the chartered course, / Knowing soon I'd set off for another shore."

Terrie's course was laid before her long ago, and rather than vary that direction, she marched forward toward an inevitable outcome. Yet it wasn't with solemn grief she persevered.

Instead, she was a light in the life of many loved ones, and a selfless rescuer of those in need. Each has a chapter to tell in her story written over time.

From her early days of childhood challenges, she showed her nurturing nature by looking out for her younger sister and brother during times of need. When another sister came along she was there to help as well.

Trauma was never far away, as life placed some unsavory and abusive people in her path. Despite her own pain, she always did for others instead of herself, and she was able to endure the difficulties with consummate resolve until able to break away.

Terrie's light was seen one day by John Chesnut, and both their stories became intertwined. The love they shared led to the joys of their lives. David and Timmi, and later to the next generation, Chase, Paige, Paityn and Paxton — Nana's best friends.

For years, they enjoyed fun in many forms, from clam digging to camping, but fun wasn't always limited to outdoor activities. Terrie was a prankster at heart, leading to many moments of laughter.

She was an avid cupcake baker, sharing her love of sweets with all those around. Trained as a massage therapist, her delicate, healing touch was a comfort and gift.

Along her journey, Terrie would continue to show her compassion, not only for people but for unfortunate animals, as well. It was not uncommon for her to rescue a dog or cat in need.

One such example was when driving with her sister and brother, she told her sister to stop the car when she saw a dog cross the road. She insisted they try and rescue it, only leading to her brother being bitten in the attempt, as the dog continued along its way.

Another time, she con-

vinced her other sister to come all the way to Oregon to pick up a cat she had "gotten" her for her birthday. It was Terrie's nature to rescue. Yet her internal struggles with life took her along a road leading to many difficulties, which would ultimately bring her to an unfortunate shortening of her story.

But even reaching that end, she continued to write more of her story. Her recent move to Scottsville, Virginia, brought her some final peace.

Surrounded by her family, Terrie's last days were full of love and laughter, culminating in a fitting final champagne toast and send off with the mayor of Scottsville on April 22. It was as if honors deserved were finally bestowed on this wonder-

ful woman, who touched the lives of so many.

Now Terrie's story, starting on June 20, 1960, will continue through the memories of her loved ones and the courses she has helped chart. To those who are part of her story, may you continue to write Terrie's legacy.

Goodbye, sweetheart, and don't let your journey to heaven be sidetracked by a stray dog.

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