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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2002

Today's weather picture by: **Matt Armstrong**, 9, Vancouver, Felida Elementary School



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## WHEN THE CASH HEADS OUT OF TOWN

With no real local focus for their generosity, Clark County arts patrons send gifts to Oregon

By **BRETT OPPEGAARD**  
Columbian staff writer

Of all the places she could have been in Portland, eccentric performance artist Laurie Anderson of New York brought her complex exhibition of spoken word and music and sounds to Skyview High School this summer, filling the 1,150-seat auditorium in Salmon Creek.

Strung together with recent local appearances by the late comedian Steve Allen, classical guitar virtuoso Christopher Parkening and actor/conductor David Ogden Stiers, a pattern does seem to be emerging north of the Columbia River.

Clark County and its residents appear empowered by relatively new theaters at Skyview, Fort Vancouver High School and the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, leading to increasingly bigger cravings

for cultural and entertainment events of their own.

The annual Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza and the Clark County Fair have appealed to the metro area's masses for decades, yet when completed in the spring, the 18,000-seat amphitheater at the fairgrounds will give this area a venue unparalleled in Portland. It all adds to the evidence that with the right support and nourishment at least some of the region's prime, and even sophisticated, events successfully can happen here.

Despite such gradual progress, though, virtually all major arts and entertainment activity still revolves around downtown Portland. That's where the best venues are, which, in turn, draw the best acts. Clark County residents have no reservations about crossing the Columbia to at-

tend such offerings, perpetuating the Portland organizations' dominance through ticket purchases and by making charitable donations.

### \$860,000 headed south

A sampling of 10 of the largest arts organizations in Oregon, primarily in Portland, reveals that Clark County donors gave roughly \$860,000 to those groups in the past fiscal year. In contrast, only one arts organization in Southwest Washington — the Vancouver Symphony — receives significant support from local donors.

Yet all of the money the Vancouver Symphony raised in this manner during the past fiscal year (\$144,000) is still less than half of what its Portland counterpart, the Oregon Symphony,

DONATIONS, page D3

## Adventures in bicoastal hotel stays

**DAVE BARRY**



I recently spent several weeks on a book tour, flying around the country with a suitcase full of increasingly alarming underwear. I'm pleased to report that airport security remains highly effective, especially as regards the terrorist threat posed by 87-year-old women with the mobility of oak trees. Because these women need extra time to reach their seats, they are — as instructed by the pre-boarding announcement — first in line to board the plane, and thus they almost always get picked for "random" screening by the security personnel, who need to reach their quota so they can

get back to standing around. We frequent flyers have figured this system out, and lag behind the elderly women, who dodder forward cluelessly, cannon fodder in the War on Terror. They are pulled aside and stand, bewildered, as security personnel wand them and root through their denture adhesive while we able-bodied males stroll onto the plane. Granted, this system is insane, but we must not let sanity stand in the way of airport security. Speaking of insane: One of my stops on the book tour was New York City, where the publisher put me at an extremely

hip hotel. It's so hip that there is no sign outside saying "HOTEL." I walked right past it the first time. Evidently if you're hip, you just know there's a hotel there. The lobby was full of hip people on stark modernistic furniture, talking into cell phones. They were all 25 years old, and they all wore black. I suspect their underwear is black. I myself was wearing khaki pants. I felt like a pig farmer in town for the big manure-spreader show. The worst part was that I couldn't see. At some point in

BARRY, page D3

## CHRISTMAS SHIPS

Route for Dec. 8



Parade participants will assemble in front of the Port of Camas-Washougal at 6 tonight and stay in this area for about two hours before returning to their moorage near Salty's Restaurant.

The Columbian

# Donations:

From page D1

brought in from Southwest Washington donors (\$306,000). In fact, the Vancouver group's entire annual operating budget for 2002-03 (\$280,000) doesn't even match the local gifts to Oregon Symphony.

Clark County residents furthermore gave nearly that same budget amount this year (\$240,000) to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Ore., which is about 300 miles south.

## Caliber improves

"That's a shame, just a real shame to have that much money leaving our community," said Jan Asai, volunteer development director for Vancouver's prime dance company, Columbia Dance Ensemble. "On the other hand, I think that we're coming along. I don't know how long it will take, but the caliber of performances here have been going up over the years. . . . We have to find ways to encourage people to get more involved in what we have in our community, so they can see what the quality is, and then maybe we could get them excited about helping it to develop."

Mark Owsley, chairman of the Vancouver Cultural Commission, said, "I think it's great that people here are giving to the arts, and that tells you that behind the annual donations is a lot more money. . . . I don't blame them for going across the river because that's where the quality usually is, not al-

ways, but usually. And I don't think we've presented anybody with a (large) project that's really worth their time and money yet. . . . Not having a (public) performing arts center is a big part of (the dynamics)."

The cultural commission within the next month or so, he said, intends to ask the Vancouver City Council to start looking for proposals to build just such a venue, fueled by the \$700,000 seed money gained from the sale of the Columbia Arts Center two years ago.

"But there has to be a vision, and there has to be somebody here that's willing to be a leader," Owsley said.

A logical candidate could be arts patron Leslie Durst of Vancouver, who was instrumental in helping to transform Shumway Middle School into the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics in the early 1990s. She gave \$1 million for that project, and then when it ran out of money during renovation of the auditorium, Durst donated another \$370,000 to finish the job.

In addition, Durst has given through the years to the Vancouver Symphony, Columbia Dance Ensemble and the Sculpture Garden on Broadway, plus various Portland groups, including the Oregon Symphony, Oregon Ballet Theatre and White Bird. One of her prime interests is the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, which she helped to found in 1995 and has continued to support significantly. It was Durst's influence with PICA that made the Anderson performance at Skyview this summer possible.

Durst, who was reared in

New York and lived in Florida before moving to Vancouver a decade ago, says locality doesn't dictate her decision making when it comes to donations to the arts.

"My philanthropy is about what generates a response in me," she said. "Ultimately, I can't give to every single arts organization that calls on me. I respond to people, and I respond to projects. It doesn't matter if it's in Clark County or Portland or wherever."

## No big motivator

"Arts are part of the fabric of every community, and I'd like to see more success in that area here," Durst said. "But I haven't heard of anything that makes me want to rush out and join up."

Kathryn Reith, a Clark County resident who also is vice chairwoman of the board of directors at Artists Repertory Theatre, Portland's second largest theater company, said she would like to support local efforts more, too, but has trouble finding causes in Vancouver that inspire her.

"Nothing's really reached out and grabbed me," Reith said. "In terms of size of organizations and quality of productions, that really is in Portland at this point. . . . Clark County just doesn't have anything similar."

Artists Repertory Theatre is only one of the Oregon arts groups that has used such competitive advantage to attract talented Clark County people, as well as major donors from the area. Those include William and Julie Reiersgaard, who gave a large undisclosed amount to the

company in the mid-1990s to help create a \$1.2 million black box theater in downtown Portland, later dubbed the Reiersgaard Theatre.

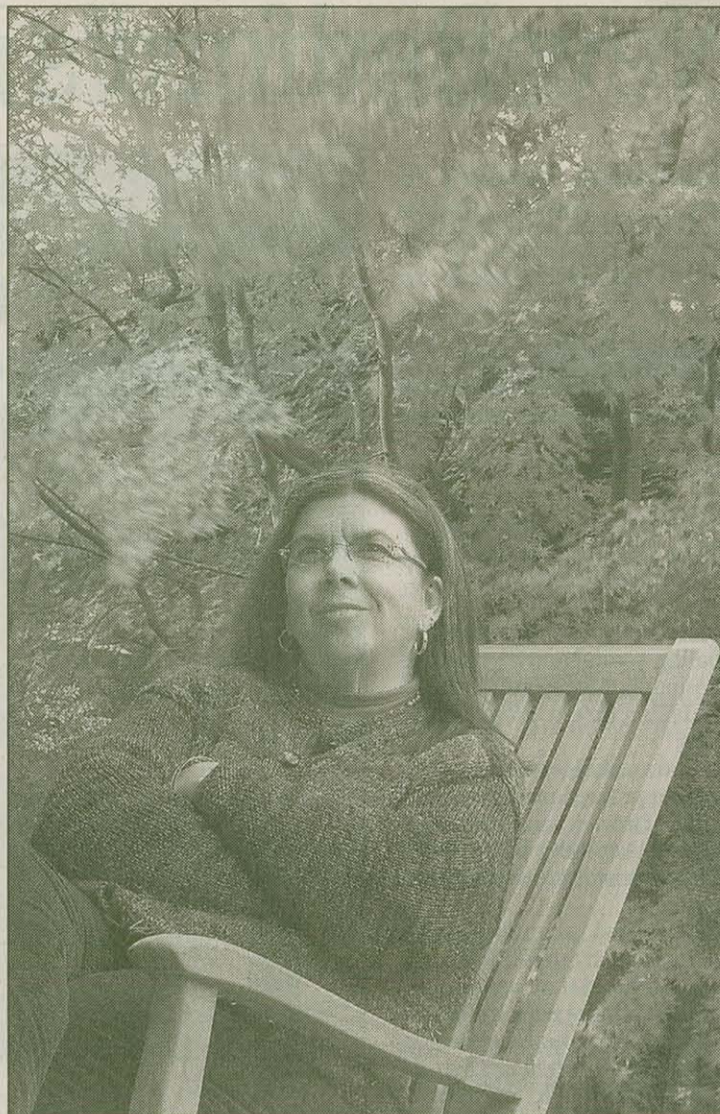
"I think people have to see us in a larger picture," said Graham McReynolds, vice president of marketing and development for Oregon Symphony, which gathered the most of Clark County's individual donations to the arts last year. "We've always thought of ourselves as a regional organization with deep roots. We are the first American orchestra established west of the Mississippi — before Seattle, San Francisco or Los Angeles. People have been coming to us for years. People who support us financially have done so for a long time. It's a part of their life experience. They come to the hall, so they support us financially."

## Not a target

McReynolds says the Oregon Symphony doesn't specifically target Clark County or any other geographic area in fund-raising, and it doesn't consider Vancouver Symphony a competitor. Instead, the group just tries to keep its patrons involved and engaged in the art form.

"Our belief is that the more symphonic music being played, the more people will come to it here," he said. "When we tour and perform, we don't feel bound by our state border. We always look regionally for support."

Owsley of the Vancouver Cultural Commission said, "A fact of life in this town is that we have to compete with the size of the projects and groups



STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Clark County arts patron Leslie Durst has helped fund projects throughout the metropolitan area, including establishing the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art as well as the Royal Durst Theatre in the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics.

in Portland. I don't condemn people for taking their money over there, but if they want to see something better in the town they live, if they want to

support the arts that their children and neighbors are participating in, then they are going to need to be open to listening to proposals."

# Barry:

From page D1

recent years, light must have become unhip, because this was the darkest hotel I've ever stayed in. The lobby wasn't so bad — it was merely gloomy — but the elevator was so dimly lit that I had to put on my reading glasses, squat, and put my face right next to the buttons to find the one for my floor. I'm sure this amused the hip lobby people. ("Look! A pig farmer squatting in the elevator!")

My floor was actually scary. Have you ever been in one of those Halloween fun houses, where it's pitch-black and people leap out of the darkness to frighten you? The hotel hallway was like that. It was so dark that I honestly could not see my feet. I initially thought the walls were painted black, although I was later informed that they were very dark purple (a hip color). Sometimes I would encounter other guests in the hallway, but of course I could not see them, because



they were wearing black. I knew they were there only because I could hear their cell phones ringing.

My room had stark modernistic furniture and several modernistic low-wattage

lamps, which, when I turned them all on, provided about the same illumination as a radio dial. The only way to read was to turn the TV on and tune it to a program with bright colors, such as "Bay-

watch." My room was strewn with hip items, many of them for sale, including a hotel T-shirt (black), various herbal substances and an "Intimacy Kit" for \$12. If they really want to make money, they should sell 100-watt light bulbs; I would have paid \$20 for one. They did sell a candle, labeled "TRAVEL CANDLE," for \$15; I considered buying it and using it in the elevator, to find the "Lobby" button.

My situation improved in California, where I stayed at a swank Beverly Hills hotel that had lights. It also had a swank bar jammed to the walls with 40ish movie executives who all wore (there must have been a memo) black pants, black shirts and black leather jackets. They were talking about film projects with young, gifted blonde women wearing attire that conveyed the message: "Take a look at THESE gifts!" Everybody was drinking — really — watermelon martinis. So I was still out of place ("Look! A pig

farmer drinking beer!"). But at least I could see.

**IRRELEVANT FINAL BOOK-TOUR NOTE:** You know how, at drugstore cash registers, there are little displays of breath mints, batteries, etc. to encourage impulse buys? Well, in Los Angeles, I went into a Long's drugstore where the product on display at the cash register was: a sofa. Really. Suspended ominously right behind the cashier's head was a full-sized sofa, priced at \$499. Apparently this is for the harried shopper who gets to the cashier and goes, "Let's see . . . dental

floss, aspirin, and . . . Ohmigod! I almost forgot the sofa!"

I should write a clever final sentence here, but I need to do my laundry.

**DAVE BARRY** is a humor columnist for the *Miami Herald*. Write to him c/o *The Miami Herald*, One Herald Plaza, Miami, FL 33132.

# Heart attack victims fail to act

By JANE E. ALLEN  
Los Angeles Times

Americans are more aware than ever about the importance of heart health, getting their cholesterol and blood pressure checked and being careful about fat in their diets. Yet, when it comes to having a heart attack, they can be downright foolish. Just half of those experiencing a heart attack call 911 for an ambulance.

The rest (typically younger men) drive themselves to a hospital or ask someone for a ride, potentially missing out on lifesaving treatment by paramedics before they get to the emergency room, according to a study published in the Nov. 25 online version of *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Those arriving by ambulance not only had a greater

chance of receiving clot-busting therapy or an angioplasty to open up clogged arteries, the study found, they also received such therapies more quickly. They got clot-busting medications an average of 12 minutes sooner than those who drove themselves. Those who underwent angioplasty to open up clogged arteries received treatment an average of 31 minutes sooner than those who came on their own — and 56 percent of them got it within the 90-minute treatment window recommended by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.

"These need to be given early to be most effective," Dr. John G. Canto, the lead author and director of the chest-pain center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said in

a statement.

People who arrived at the hospital by ambulance tended to be older, sicker, and more likely to have had a history of heart problems. Their death rate was 14.3 percent, compared with 5.5 percent of the group not brought by ambulance. But two-thirds of that difference can be explained by their age and advanced illness.

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