

## Commons User Support Report

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A perspective from onstage.

During the recent Yachats Celtic Music Festival, I had the privilege of being the emcee for the main stage concerts in the Commons Multi-Purpose Room. And what a wonderful festival it was! As I stood on stage - awash in stage lighting and perched amongst all the microphones, instruments and musicians, I happened to look down at the stage floor. I was making sure the area was clear of wires and such for the next performer – who, by the way, was a wonderful Irish dancer who was performing with the next band to play. And for an instant I saw those slightly worn floor boards and had a flash of memory. The memory was from many years ago, when the Friends of the Commons hired local woodworker, Calder Bell, to install new flooring over the old, well-worn stage that had served many years of use by the former Yachats grade school.

As I write this, my last report as Commons User Support Manager under the Friends of the Yachats Commons Foundation, I would like to reflect on my experience while standing on the stage last weekend - among the microphones, wires and musicians and looking out upon a full house audience. The ‘flirt’ of those nicely lit boards on the stage floor caught my attention. For a moment I was transported back in time to when the Friends were asked to do something to fix the old and worn out stage floor that had served the grade school well for many, many years. Calder Bell, a local wood worker, donated his time and talents to install the new stage floor and the Friends purchased the materials and stained them after installation. That made a remarkable difference on the stage. But I digress.

As I was standing there on stage, I noticed how good that fleeting memory felt - a lot like being at home. From my perspective on stage, I saw and recognized the many improvements made over the years thanks to groups like Friends of the Commons, Polly Plumb Productions, One of Us Productions, The Ladies Club, the Lions Club, and the huge number of

volunteer community members that have made those facility improvements happen.

I stood on stage awash in the theatre lighting, looking past the new stage curtains into a room full of audience members - themselves softly lit by the new LED lights - all seated at tables and on chairs. The furniture was placed on the recently installed vinyl flooring - that covers the MP room and runs into the hallway and into the Kitchen and Room 8 (the newly equipped conference room). The carpeted walls and acoustic panels provided an enhanced space for music and speakers to be better heard and appreciated. Over the packed house audience, I could see light coming from the kitchen where an ambitious crew of volunteers was cooking and serving fine Celtic cuisine along with libations aplenty. A well-equipped commercial kitchen indeed that sports a commercial grade freezer, reach in cooler, high capacity coffee maker, commercial convection oven and a 'safe' commercial propane stove. And as you all already know, the kitchen is nicely equipped with cabinets, sinks, a huge stainless steel serving island. Dishes, silverware, cups/glasses and lots of utensils are tools of the kitchen trade that many cooks have at their disposal to perform their regular culinary magic.

Leaving the kitchen and turning left, there were Celtic Merchants set up in the newly carpeted hallway. These carpet tiles extend into the City Council chamber which served as Polly Plumb's control central - selling t-shirts, cd's, and concert "buttons" for the festival. This was where the public was welcomed and given programs and information on the variety of events that made up this year's festival. This list of facility improvements was made possible, over the years, by organizations like the Friends of the Commons - who shepherded many of these improvement projects with grant proposals, fundraising from local individuals and organizations, and in partnership with the City Council and Parks and Commons.

What I also witnessed from my stage vantage were all the enthusiastic members of the audience, coming together from near and far to be a part of an ongoing community here at the Commons. The room we were in has held too many such gatherings to count. Times when we have gathered to share sadness over a loss, and celebrate the lives of so many. We have gathered to learn and share about our history, our culture - and to process strife and challenges we necessarily have living in a small town like Yachats.

I recognize that the physical improvements which have happened over the years, as amazing as they are, serve only as a “means to an end”. The end goal has been, and will continue to be, the Friends and the hundreds of folks who are “Friends of the Friends” who work together, hand in hand, to support the vitality of our Commons Community Center.

Onward.

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*Peace within - Peace between - Peace among*