

Having a front-row seat to history

◆ A Clarkson couple sees its public access show as a way of giving back to the community.

By Amy Cavalier
Messenger Post Staff

The camera rolls as James Higgins gets down on one knee and proclaims his undying love to Luella Jenne-John. He proposes to her with such emotion that it's hard to believe this is just a reenactment.

Higgins and Jenne-John are the stars of the "Our Amazing Seniors" segment in the February edition of the public access show, "PROFILE! Magazine."

The couple, both in their 80s, met 18 months ago at the Sweden Senior Center and are recreating their real-life engagement. They will be married on Valentine's Day by the justice of the peace.

"We love one another in every way you can possibly love someone," says Jenne-John.

As the couple kiss and pledge their love to each other, "PROFILE! Magazine" producer Tara Lavigne wipes back tears. Lavigne's husband Gerard Regula, technical director of the show, captures the couple on film.

"I like to see our show as a historic time capsule," says Lavigne. "Our niche is historic restoration for people."

Moments like these are just one of the reasons that the creators of the nonprofit, public access show love what they do.

"PROFILE! Magazine" began airing in January. The show, which airs Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. on Channel 12, features three segments; "Our Amazing Seniors," a historical showcase and a travel segment.

Higgins and Jenne-John are featured in this month's senior segment, and they are a perfect example of what Lavigne wants to portray to television audiences.

"I want to break tradition in



STAFF PHOTO/AMY CAVALIER

Husband-and-wife team Gerard Regula and Tara Lavigne film on location at the Sweden Senior Center for the February episode of their public access show, PROFILE! Magazine.

the way seniors are portrayed on television," she said.

Regula agreed.

"Typically, on television, seniors have medical problems, play golf or bake cookies," he said. "We want to show people that it's never too late to do anything now days. It's a positive way to portray seniors," he said.

Overall, Lavigne and Regula want to raise the bar for public access.

"I want our productions to be something that reflects our style and that is something I'm proud to put my name on," Lavigne said.

Lavigne began producing shows for public access in Sacramento, Calif., more than a decade ago. That's where she met Regula.

"Our love of television, radio, writing and public speaking brought us together," Lavigne said.

From there, Lavigne taught Regula how to shoot videos.

"I had never used a camera,"

he said. "She trained me in lighting, editing and audio."

Upon moving to Clarkson two years ago, Lavigne and Regula formed Starlight Productions, a project that takes up much of their spare time.

"People don't realize how much work goes into producing these shows," he said.

The two will spend three to six hours on location setting up and taping each segment, which are on average about eight minutes each. They spend 20 to 30 hours in post production, editing the piece and adding music or voice-overs where necessary.

"Sometimes we will spend an entire week creating one segment," Regula said.

Occasionally, Lavigne said a shoot doesn't pan out how as she expected, or the person they're filming gets camera shy.

"I've learned to always have three guests and three backups," she said.

Lavigne said patience,

curiosity, humor and people skills are a must in her field.

"There have been times when I've had to wing it," she said. "If the people story doesn't work out, I'll go outside and find a fascinating travel segment. There's always a story to tell and I have plenty of ideas."

Each episode of "PROFILE! Magazine" has a theme. The February theme is romance.

In the future, Lavigne said, it's her dream to do a silent comedy show.

"Silent pictures, when done correctly, have universal appeal," she said. "I think it will have a strong appeal for the deaf population in Rochester."

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