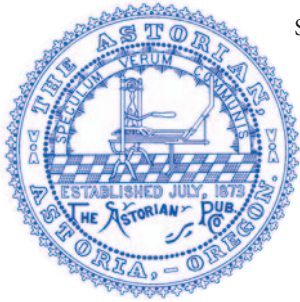


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Rejoice! Flavel mansion is soon to reawaken

A person almost fears to mention the prospect for fear of jinxing it, but the long and terrible saga of the Flavel house may soon have a happy ending.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that watching the classic home at 15th Street and Franklin Avenue has been like seeing a prisoner rot away in solitary confinement. This has been especially evident in the past decade or two as Astoria's housing stock has become more cherished, with hundreds of homes gradually restored to something like their original glory.

Meanwhile, the Flavel house has been Astoria's Rip Van Winkle, growing steadily older

and more care-worn as a new city has blossomed around it. Walking by and scaring one another with ghost stories, or daring one another to peer through cracks in window coverings, has been a virtual rite of passage for a generation of Astoria youngsters. But for most Astorians, these minor thrills will be joyfully forgotten if we see a new owner begin to bring this community asset back to life.

Whoever buys it will have quite a task ahead. Fortunately, our community is well stocked with top professional experts at home restoration, along with craftsmen, suppliers and sympathetic homeowners who have ventured down the same paths before.

## A voice of reason on minimum wage

*Still recovering from recession, Oregon must exercise caution*

Oregon's minimum wage increased 15 cents today.

The new rate — \$9.25 per hour — remains the second-highest in the nation, behind only our neighbor to the north, Washington. Yet several Oregon politicians already are gunning up support for a \$15 minimum wage.

We're pleased to read that Peter Courtney, president of the state Senate, is lukewarm to the idea. He cautioned fellow Democrats not to overreach on the issue, saying it could jeopardize their party's new majority in Salem.

Courtney's advice is wise for more than reasons of political power. A sharp increase in the minimum wage in a state that is still recovering from a brutal recession is risky. There is scant evidence that such a boost would benefit the state or local economies.

The economic impact of hiking minimum wages is unclear. There are dozens of research papers on the subject. Their conclusions are conflicting.

Some argue that minimum wage increases boost consumer spending. Others say the impact is short-term, encouraging low-wage workers to take on more debt for big-ticket items such as cars.

Much depends on how employers would react to a large increase in the minimum wage. They could hire fewer workers. Or raise prices. Or lay off higher-paid

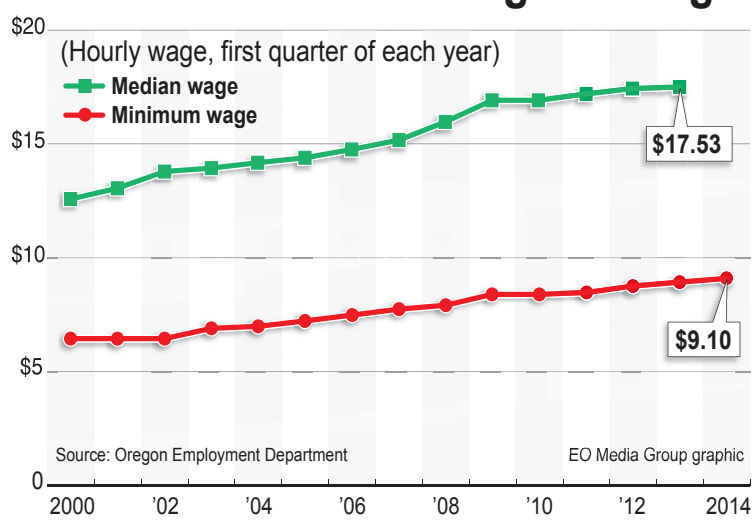
employees. Again, economists disagree on the potential response.

Oregon's minimum wage is adjusted each year for inflation. This has kept it at half the median hourly wage for all Oregon workers. That is a sound level for a wage for unskilled workers compared with employees with years of experience or specialized skills.

The \$15 minimum wage appears to be the new gold standard for activists, unions and others doing battle in the name of economic equality. The city of Seattle was the first to make the leap, though its City Council tempered the impact by phasing the increase over several years. San Francisco soon followed suit.

Oregon legislators should at least wait to see how those jurisdictions fare under the \$15 minimum before following their lead. As Mark Twain said: "Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please."

### Minimum vs. median wage in Oregon



## Before plunging into 2015, reflect

Being the news junkie that I am, at the beginning of every January, I can't help but wonder what the biggest news stories of the upcoming year will be.

Unfortunately, most all of the national and international stories topping the list at year's end are bad news: natural disasters, wars, serial murders, plane crashes and celebrities gone awry.

Even in our own region, the top stories in Cannon Beach and Seaside were bad news.

In Cannon Beach, taking top spot was the murder of a 2-year-old girl and the attempted murder of her 13-year-old sister, allegedly by their mother.

Two forest fires in Arch Cape; sea star wasting disease at Haystack Rock; the pursuit and denial of a charter for the Cannon Beach Academy; and the deaths of some well-known residents, including Cannon Beach Book Co. owner Val Ryan, also were among those stories on the list.

In Seaside, the recent death of another 2-year-old girl and an accident last spring when a family nearly drowned after their car went off a boat ramp and into the Necanicum River headed the "top story" list.

Other stories include an effort to recall Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop, a controversial adolescent sexuality conference and the inundation of anchovies onto the banks of the Necanicum River.

But there were happier stories, too.

- The South County Community Food Bank successfully found a new location; a celebration and open house will occur soon. This was a story about the cooperation between the Seaside School District, which gave away two portable buildings from the former Cannon Beach Elementary School; the city of Cannon Beach; and the Seaside pantry officials to create a permanent location for the pantry.

- A few months later, the Cannon Beach Food Pantry found itself in the same position: It had to move from its present location. Once again, the school district and Cannon Beach officials helped out, and the Cannon Beach pantry is busy remodeling another portable building at the former school site and will move in soon.

- While the retirement and departure of former Seaside Police Chief Bob Gross was a sad occasion for many, the city made an easy transition by promoting Seaside police Lt. Dave Ham, who has been with the department since 1995.

- The city of Seaside is anticipating other changes in the future, with a 20-year "visioning" campaign completed and the purchase of a former church building that could become another event space.



JEFF TER HAR — For The Daily Astorian  
Looking to make a goal, an elk herd spends time munching the grass near the goal post at Seaside High School Jan. 31.

## IMPRESSIONS

BY  
NANCY  
MCCARTHY



- Cannon Beach's Sandcastle Contest celebrated its 50th anniversary. Or was it the 50th? There may be more to this story in 2015....

- But there are stories that resonate personally with me that wouldn't necessarily make the Top 10 list or any list for that matter:

- The invasion of elk in Gearhart and Seaside. Photos emailed to me by business owner Jeff Ter Har; nature photographer Neal Maine; and, especially, Gearhart administrative assistant and treasurer Gail Como generated more than 30,000 hits from all over the world on the Seaside Signal Facebook page.

- Cash, the would-be K-9 officer in Cannon Beach, got fired. It was a small story that captured the interest and imagination of news outlets across the country.

- The tussle over ownership of the south half of the Cannon Beach Elementary School property. The school district owns it, and the Cannon Beach City Council wants to buy it, but not for the \$1.2 million the district is requesting. There was a flurry of words from the school district chairman and the Cannon Beach mayor, then (apparent) silence.

- It wouldn't make anyone's list of top news stories, but when Cannon Beach reporter Erick Bengel decided to accompany City Planner Mark Barnes on a bicycle ride from Seaside to Cannon Beach, I also had to take the trip — by car — to take photos. I didn't know

whether to laugh at Erick's attempts to climb the Cannon Beach hill or worry that the 25-pound backpack he was carrying would finish him off.

Then there are experiences that aren't stories but are pretty memorable for me, anyway:

- My first visit to the Seaside Jazz Festival allowed me to listen to wonderful music and watch dancers get into the "beat."

- I appreciated the sense of peace and true connection felt throughout the room during the "Welcome Home Salmon" celebration in Cannon Beach.

- There was the thrill when the *Seaside Signal* staff was awarded the Seaside Chamber of Commerce's "Business of the Year" award.

- I very much enjoyed the enthusiastic performance of "Grease" put on by Seaside High School students last spring. There are truly talented youth — and instructors — on the North Coast.

- It was fun to be part of the camaraderie among friends at the Seaside Downtown Development Association and Seaside Chamber of Commerce morning breakfasts throughout the year. If you want to know what's going on in the South County, that's where to go.

Every day we are on the lookout for news, seeking stories that intrigue, entertain, inform and inspire. Then there are the stories that take us by surprise, that overwhelm us, disappoint, alarm and bring us to despair.

Sometimes we become so inundated with the news and with deadlines that we don't have time to pause and take a look back. I guess that's what the turn of the calendar page on Dec. 31 enables us to do.

We reflect on the past year, take a deep breath and plunge into the next year, ready to explore what comes next.

*Nancy McCarthy covers South County for The Daily Astorian and is the editor of the Cannon Beach Gazette and the Seaside Signal. Her column appears every two weeks.*

## A Democrat to watch in the new year

By FRANK BRUNI  
*New York Times News Service*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — With the New Year comes a new slate of officeholders whose careers warrant close attention and whose fates could have broader political implications.

Put Gina Raimondo near the top of that list.

She's the first woman to be elected governor of Rhode Island, and when she's inaugurated next week, she'll become, at 43, one of just two Democratic women, alongside Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, at the helms of their states.

But it's another prominent female Democrat from New England who provides a more interesting point of reference for Raimondo. I mean Elizabeth Warren, the senator from Massachusetts. As much as Warren has excited the left wing of her party, Raimondo has enraged them.

She just wrapped up four years as her state's treasurer, during which she successfully pushed an unusually ambitious overhaul of the pension system for state employees. It suspended cost-of-living adjustments, raised the retirement age by five years and left unions boiling mad. They opposed her in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. She marched to the governor's job in tension, not harmony, with a key element of the party's base.

Some in the party cast her as a pawn of the finance industry and big corporations, partly because she once worked in venture capital. She started Rhode Island's first venture capital firm.

She doesn't talk about plutocrats with Warren's angry fire, not because she thinks they're above reproach but because she deems vilifying

them less fruitful than reminding them that they, too, have a profound stake in a healthier America with a fairer distribution of wealth and more social mobility.

"I fall into the camp that income inequality is the biggest problem we face," she said Monday night over eggplant parmigiana in a Providence restaurant. An Italian-American, she grew up just outside the city and lives here now with her husband and their two young children.

She said that she has told Wall Street titans point blank that they should be paying higher federal

taxes and leveling the playing field, but with this message: "I need you to double down on America. We need you. We need your brains, we need your money, we need your engagement — not because it's Wall Street versus Main Street, but because you're some of the smartest, richest people in the world, and you need to be a part of fixing America, because you want to live in an America that's the best country in the world."

She said that Democrats must always prioritize the underdogs, the strivers. And she spoke admirably of Warren: "She says things that make people uncomfortable but need to be said."

But, she added, "My own rhetoric is not so 'us versus them.' I don't like fighting."

And she has highlighted additional concerns, such as the Democratic Party's frequent fealty to organized labor and its reluctance at times to shake up the status quo in order to find the money needed for social spending.

Her pension-reform campaign was fascinating for its blunt talk of trade-offs, of sacrifices today for



Frank Bruni

investments in tomorrow. She framed the cutbacks as progressive — as the only responsible liberalism — because without them, education, infrastructure, transportation and more would suffer.

She thus provided a template for how politicians in Washington could try to rein in Social Security and Medicare spending, if they wished. An article

in *National Journal* framed her efforts and the pushback against them as "a battle for the Democratic Party's future," and Matt Miller later wrote in *The Washington Post* that she could transform the "national conversation about how to achieve progressive goals in an aging America."

She sometimes speaks a language of metrics that makes her as stirring to some business-minded centrists as Warren is to many liberals. And if she manages to improve Rhode Island's famously beleaguered economy, she's teed up to be a national player, thanks to her youth and back story: a working-class upbringing followed by Harvard, then a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, then Yale Law.

She's small — just under 5-foot-3 — and intense. When she mentions that she played rugby in school, it fits. When she describes her advantage on the field, it sounds as if she's talking about more than sport. "It's good to be little and fast," she said.

In focus groups, some Rhode Islanders called her "too harsh," she said, a judgment seemingly connected to her wardrobe of suits. "Then you show them pictures of me in casual clothes and they're like, 'Oh, she seems nice.' It's, like, if you're a strong woman, you can't also be nice. It's really that simple."

Will she be a strong governor? She starts out dogged by a sweeping court challenge to those pension reforms.

But this much is clear: She takes risks, colors outside the lines and seeks a tone all her own. That's worthy of note.