

Heroes: 'It's been challenging, but it's been rewarding'

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Community recognition

The winners were each short on words after being paraded through an applauding, largely flannel-clad crowd at the lumberjack-themed banquet. Afterward, though, each spoke of the satisfaction at being honored for their work behind the scenes.

"I've always felt like I was in the background, and to have this recognition is huge," Bruner said.

After retiring as secretary at Astoria Middle School, Bruner took a lead role in collecting holiday meals for hundreds of local families as part of the Christmas Food Basket Program. Bruner volunteers with the Clatsop Cruise Hosts, Scandinavian Midsummer Festival Association and First Lutheran Church, while she and her husband deliver for the Meals on Wheels program. Bruner deferred to the larger corps of volunteers around her.

"There are a lot of people out there doing things that are unsung heroes," Bruner said. "I know that's a silly term, but you can't put on an event without backup."

Meyer, co-owner of Complete Photographer with her husband, Chuck, for more than 30 years, has amassed an

extensive volunteer resume since moving to Astoria in 1971. She has volunteered for The Harbor, which combats domestic violence, and local schools, the American Association of University Women, Clatsop County Health District, the chamber, Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, Astoria Riverfront Trolley and a state commission on youth, among other endeavors.

"Community is really special," Meyer said of the volunteerism in Astoria, "and it takes volunteers to make community."

Flavel famous

Newenhof, a co-owner of City Lumber, volunteered with the Astoria Regatta, Rotary, school district and other groups. But Newenhof stayed largely under the radar until he purchased and began restoring the Flavel family's dilapidated mansion at 15th Street and Franklin Avenue last year.

"I don't know who people are, but they know who I am," Newenhof said of his newfound notoriety.

Chamber Executive Director Skip Hauke, presenting Newenhof's award, said he'd originally come into the mansion as a volunteer with the Clatsop County Historical Society, but fell in love with

the building.

"Since he bought the home, this individual has poured blood, sweat, tears, time, elbow grease and just a little money into bringing this stunning building back to life," Hauke said.

Warming Warrenton

In her day job, Warren is an agent with Farmers Insurance in Warrenton. Outside work, she serves with the Warrenton Business Association, Warrenton-Hammond School Board, Kiwanis Club of Warrenton and nonprofit Warrenton-Hammond Healthy Kids Inc., among other groups.

Recently, after volunteering with the Astoria Warming Shelter and hearing about the need for such a service in her home city, Warren and several others helped start the Warrenton Warming Shelter, which this winter started taking in the homeless at Calvary Assembly of God on Main Street during inclement weather and temperatures below 38 degrees.

"It's been challenging, but it's been rewarding," Warren said. "Our biggest challenge, probably, has been pulling together volunteers."

Warren said the center has 40 to 60 volunteers, but probably needs a pool of about 150. "We need 10 to 12 people a night."



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

LEFT: Greg Newenhof, co-owner of City Lumber, was honored with a George Award, Astoria's citizen-of-the-year honor, for his volunteerism and restoration of the Flavel mansion on 15th Street and Franklin Avenue. Presenting the award was lumberjack-themed Skip Hauke, director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce. RIGHT: Community volunteer Myrle Bruner was emotional coming through the crowd to collect her George Award, Astoria's citizen-of-the-year honor.



LEFT: Sara Meyer, left, was honored for her prodigious volunteerism with a citizen-of-the-year George Award, presented by Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear. RIGHT: Kelsey Balensifer, right, who organized her third Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce banquet a day after her birthday, was honored by former chamber board President David Reid.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Friends, family and community members gather at Warrenton City Park for a candlelight vigil Sunday.

Vigil: 'He was there to protect everybody'

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mother. "He was there to protect everybody. I still expect him to wake me up at night and say, 'Mom, someone needs help.'"

Secord's friends, who played football and baseball and also wrestled, echoed his mother's sentiments.

Ethan Johnson, a 17-year-old from Seaside, remembered one occasion when Secord came down to comfort him.

"No matter what your issue was, he'd be there to help," Johnson said. "He would carry the world on his shoulders and he still wouldn't break. I just hope that everybody remembers him the way I do, as that little kid with a smile on his face."

Lizabeth Rehnert, a 15-year-old Warrenton High School student, organized the vigil.

"It was just to find hope," she said. "No one wants to be alone for these kinds of things."

Rehnert met Secord a few years ago when they were students at Warrenton Middle School. She remembers him as a great athlete, a funny person and a good friend.

"He was really nice to everyone," she said. "Everyone just loved being around him."

Brenda McKune, Secord's grandmother, remembered his chivalry as a young boy. She coordinates an annual scrapbooking, crafting and card-making event in Warrenton called Scrap Hunger. Each year since he was 9, Secord would insist on carrying women's tote bags for them.

"He'd tell them, 'You're a



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Students place their candles on the ground during a candlelight vigil to remember the life of Trevor Secord on Sunday at Warrenton City Park. Secord, a 15-year-old Warrenton student, died late Thursday after he was struck by a car near Gearhart.

lady. You shouldn't be carrying those heavy bags," McKune said.

Oregon State Police said Friday they were investigating whether alcohol contributed to Secord's actions.

McKune said she has filed numerous complaints to Warrenton Police in recent years about adults providing alcohol to underage drinkers. She said she made her latest complaint Thursday night a little more than three hours before Secord's death.

"These adults have got to stop feeding our kids alcohol because things like this happen," she said.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

A memorial for Trevor Secord is outside the Warrenton Post Office on Friday in Warrenton.

Q&A: 'We're facing housing challenges'

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Originally from Michigan, Sullivan moved to Clatsop County in 2007. She has been active in a number of local groups such as the Astoria Budget Committee and the Astoria Visual Arts Board and was a leader in the campaign against the Oregon LNG project in Warrenton.

Sullivan, who represents the eastern portion of the county, sat down Thursday for a conversation with The Daily Astorian

Q: Were you politically active in Michigan, before you moved out here?

I've always tried to keep up with current events. I think my activism against the (Oregon LNG project) was pretty much the start of it. I learned a lot about public meeting law and regulations and regulatory bodies and how citizens can make change.

Q: What is it that prompted you to take this on?

Some people go horseback riding; I do other things. I go to meetings; I like hearing ideas. A lot of the things that I'm going to, I would probably go to even if I wasn't county commissioner. But I am going to these things because I'm a county commissioner also.

Q: Over the next four years, what are the major goals that you have set in mind that you'd like to bring to the county as commissioner?

I've lived in this community for probably about 10 years. It's a real special part of the world, and I would like us to maintain a quality of life here in the different ways that we do that. We're facing housing challenges. We're facing transportation problems. In the summertime, sometimes we have gridlock here in Astoria, Seaside, Cannon Beach. What are we going to do about that? We also need to get our communities prepared for a possible major earthquake and tsunami. I didn't know about that when I moved here. How do you prepare a population for something like that?

Q: What was your mindset going into that meeting?

Yeah, it was quite a first meeting. I'll say that. That lawsuit had been out in the public eye for almost a year, and I was elected in May. So, it's something that I've been paying attention to even though I wasn't in office. That was my first meeting, but I have four years ahead of me that I want to learn as much as I can and be as helpful as I can, because I believe the government belongs to us. We're privileged in this county with home rule that citizens can run for office. We don't have to be millionaires. We don't have to be attorneys. So I feel honored to be in a position like this and I take it very seriously.

Duncan: Official hopes to make people more aware of public health issues

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food quality — as at least equivalent to advancements in medicine for the overall health of a population. "The main reason a population has good health or bad health is public health," he said. "The high-tech stuff is fun, but most of the big gains in a general population have all been through public health."

Duncan's contributions, for which he receives a \$100 monthly stipend, are extremely valuable to the county, Public Health Director Michael McNickle said.

"We'd have to hire a consultant to review all this stuff," McNickle said. "I bet it would be difficult to find someone who does what he

does for \$100 per month."

Compared to some other countries in the world, public health in the United States is stable, Duncan said. As a result, the topic of public health usually only arises when a major health crisis occurs.

"It's tough to talk to people who are well-dressed, well-fed and well-housed about public health," he said.

As he continues his role as health officer, Duncan hopes to make residents more aware of public health issues.

"We're like mothers. Everybody likes their mothers, but they don't get them anything until Mother's Day."

— Jack Heffernan