



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Willis Van Dusen smiles as he listens to a speech by Sen. Betsy Johnson before accepting the George Award.

Chamber: 'The spirit of cooperation has never been stronger'

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people and ideas, but making people care about things," said Johnson, who praised Van Dusen's indiscriminate authenticity and generosity, whether it be with her, former President Bill Clinton during his visit in 2008 or with any member of the local community.

"At every public event," said Johnson, "Willis inevitably called positive attention to what he referred to as the Astoria team."

When he and his wife Lisa arrived on the North Coast in the early 2000s for his new job as district sales coordinator for Aflac of Astoria, Reid said they were looking forward to becoming involved in the community. You run into Reid all the time, simply because he is so involved, said Hauke during his presentation of Reid's George Award.

Over those years, said Hauke, Reid's been a volunteer of every type for the chamber, downtown association, Astoria Regatta Court, Astoria Rotary Club, Camp Kiwanilong, the Clatsop County Historical Society, the Astor Street Opry Company, the city and

more — all the way down to skimming logs to rebuild Fort Clatsop at the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

"He helps whenever he can, however he can, because he's a good guy," said Hauke.

Reid's also a Chamber member two times over, through Aflac and with his wife Lisa. The two have owned Lucy's Books since 2013. His wife was unable to be at the banquet, with an author visiting Lucy's for Second Saturday Artwalk.

Astoria-Warrenton

"One doesn't exist without the other," said Reid about the relationship between Astoria and Warrenton, reflected in its joint Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber employs five full-time employees and two part-timers, along with volunteer boards overseeing the staff, the chamber's ambassadors and for other volunteers.

It advertises its members, organizes marketing campaigns and marshals volunteers to put on such annual regional attractions as the Un-Wined wine tasting in March; the Crab, Seafood and Wine Festival in April; Fourth of



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Executive Director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce Skip Hauke showed off his '80s garb during the banquet. His costume included a gold chain from City Lumber.

July fireworks; and the Great Columbia Crossing in October.

The Chamber's 1980s-themed banquet foreshadowed its series of events in early June to mark the 30th anniversary of "The Goonies," centered around the weekend of the annual Goonies Day June

7. The 30th anniversary of the film will include cast and crew reunions, film screenings, fan gatherings, filming location tours, in addition to treasure hunting, group truffle shuffles, trivia scavenger hunts and more.

For the past year, Reid has

been president of the chamber's board of directors. He is being replaced by Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival organizer Loran Mathews.

"In my experience, the spirit of cooperation has never been stronger," said Reid,

speaking to the three goals of the chamber's board set for 2014. They included, he said:

- Remodeling the chamber welcome center at 111 W. Marine Drive, an ongoing project.

- Developing a plan to support trade and service sector chamber members. The chamber is in the midst of developing a promotion to encourage people to hire — not just shop — locally, educating the public about local contractors and service providers.

- Growing the chamber to 600 members, a goal it achieved in mid-July.

The chamber now stands at more than 620 business, non-profit, government and individual members, including Buoy Beer, not even a year old and named Chamber Member of the Year. Its award was accepted by co-owner Luke Colvin, a George Award winner in 2008.

Reid said the constant increases in membership increases the power the chamber has to affect issues important to the local economy. "This current surge in our membership is also a strong reflection of the value the chamber members, like you, feel they get from their membership."

Osborn: 'In arena football, you're so close to the action'

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"We're excited to see our fan base growing organically, and we will need dedicated fans such as Jim in order for the Thunder to succeed in what is becoming an expectant and successful sports market," Rob Boelke, the Thunder's director of media relations and digital marketing, said in an email.

The Thunder, owned by Terry Emmert, the heavy haul transport magnate in Clackamas, had an uneven expansion season. The team finished 5-13, lost in the first round of the playoffs, and fired its head coach. But attendance at Moda Center was

slightly better than league average.

Marketed as a high-scoring, free-wheeling complement to the National Football League, the Arena Football League built a footprint nationally before financially imploding after the 2008 season.

Restructured and reborn in 2010, the league has yet to recapture the same fan interest, although it has gained some pop culture buzz with celebrity owners like rock stars Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley of the Los Angeles KISS, which — like the Thunder — were an expansion franchise last year.

Many fans drawn to the

league hope to get an up-close preview of future NFL stars. Kurt Warner, an NFL and Super Bowl most valuable player, was once a quarterback for the league's Iowa Barnstormers, and many other league players have made the jump over the years.

Usually, though, fans see talented players who are struggling to keep playing professionally. One of the Thunder's quarterbacks, Darron Thomas, is a former Oregon star who gave up his senior year and declared for the NFL draft in 2012 but did not catch on with a team.

Osborn, 59, who used to referee high school and mid-

dle school football on the North Coast, thinks the league is more fan friendly than the NFL and that the players are more accessible. The papermaker at Georgia Pacific's Wauna Mill likes to take his grandson, Christiaan, to

Thunder games.

"TV does not do it justice," he said. "NFL, you can't get a better view on TV. In arena football, you're so close to the action, TV does it no good at all."

While his allegiance to the

Thunder is strong, Osborn has not forsaken the NFL. The Oakland, Calif., native still has Raiders stickers on his truck.

"I'm a football fan," he explained, grinning.

— Derrick DePledge

Burkharts: They spearheaded Warrenton Kids Inc., raising more than \$50,000 a year

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She and Carl Burkhart have been involved in the North Coast Communities in Schools' backpack program, the Warrenton-Hammond School District's Hall of Fame, the Warrenton High

School Scholarships Inc. and improving the Warrenton City Park with grant funding. They've spearheaded Warrenton Kids Inc., raising more than \$50,000 a year through dinner and silent auction.

Carl Burkhart, a U.S. Army

veteran, arrived in the mid-1970s. He has worked for NW Natural for the past couple of decades, while serving as a Cub Scout master for Troop 509, a local sports coach and a community lawn mower for his neighbors, among other endeavors.

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