

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Gov. Brown could make a bad situation better

Science is not supporting Kitzhaber's gillnet directive

It was unfortunate to see the Oregon Court of Appeals reject the lawsuit brought by Steve Fick and Jim Wells. Fick of Fishhawk Fisheries and Salmon for All President Wells contested rule making by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

This lawsuit was about former Gov. John Kitzhaber's surprising decision to eliminate gillnet fishing on the lower Columbia River. The outcome of Kitzhaber's directive — to move from gillnet fishing to a seine net fishery — is not the success story Kitzhaber said it would be.

For Kitzhaber's successor, Gov. Kate Brown, the gillnet situation represents the opportunity to make a bad situation better. While we do not have the most recent numbers for seine net fishing, prior reporting indicated that mortality rates for released wild salmon are no better overall than for gillnetting. Far from being "walls of death," as rhetorically suggested by uneducated detractors, modern gillnets and recovery tanks permit great specificity in what sizes of fish are caught, while providing wild salmon a chance to regain strength before going back in the water.

From our perspective, Kitzhaber's gillnet decision had a lot to do with the political potency of the urban sports fishing industry and little to do with fisheries science or conservation.

One consequence of the former governor's decision is the economic devastation of some long-time gillnet families as well as decreased business to the businesses that receive their fish and those who sell equipment to gillnet boat owners. At the time of Kitzhaber's sudden directive, state Sen. Betsy Johnson criticized it as an exercise in "picking winners and losers in a tough economy."

Kitzhaber rebuffed invitations from knowledgeable fisheries experts such as Steve Fick to engage in a dialogue about the outcome of his gillnet decision. Gov. Brown would advance the discussion by opening a door to that valid and insightful perspective.

We look forward to seeing our new governor in Clatsop County.

CEDR awards honor partners, entrepreneurs

The annual CEDR Awards, conferred last week at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, are a consistently inspirational glimpse into the lives and businesses of people doing innovative things here in the Columbia-Pacific region.



Kevin Leahy

CEDR — Clatsop Economic Development Resources — thanks to Executive Director Kevin Leahy and an active board, is a particularly effective example of a local business-support organization. Too often, economic development can seem like an exercise in going through the motions without much genuine prospect for making a difference. But CEDR and Clatsop Community College's Small Business Development Center — Leahy leads both — have been exceptionally active in terms of providing local entrepreneurs with the skill sets they need to have a legitimate shot at success in today's complicated competitive environment.

SBDC was recently singled out as the best such entity among 19 in the state by the federal Small Business Association. This model of getting business education out of the classroom and putting it at the fingertips of people making real-world decisions is one that deserves widespread attention. Far too often, good business ideas and aspirations aren't paired with the pragmatic skills needed to succeed over the long haul. SBDC effectively fills this gap.

Another notable award went to the parties that managed to cut through vast spools of red tape and give the Astoria community a big multipart victory. The Community Partnership Award went to Columbia Memorial Hospital, Astoria School District, the city of Astoria and Recology Western

Oregon. The results are the tremendous new Astoria Sports Complex, essential future expansion space for CMH, long-term stability for an old landfill, and utilities for Recology.

Ultimately, this will mean even better health care services for people throughout the lower Columbia region, in addition to obvious immediate gains for local student athletes and spectators.

In a way resembling the modern medical strategy of arranging multiperson organ transplants in which everyone gives something and comes out with what they need, this multiparty community negotiation could be applied to countless other situations around the country. Effective, good-faith bargaining ended up with everyone coming away a winner. What an award-worthy outcome that is.

All the private-sector CEDR award winners are great examples of tenacity, good thinking and brave investment. As outlined in our story last Thursday, Warrenton Fiber-Nygaard Logging, Astoria Brewing Co., Buoy Beer Co., Englund Marine & Industrial Supply, Vintage Hardware, Main Street Market, and Fairweather House and Garden all deserve applause for making Clatsop County a place where people can make a living in one of the country's most beautiful settings.

Businesses must never be taken for granted. The U.S. and the world are littered with enterprises that failed to prosper and have faded away. The CEDR Awards are an annual reminder that many of our neighbors work hard and are rewarded for their efforts. This is a big deal. Please join with us in congratulating them.

GUEST COLUMN

Funding failure is a disservice to students

By MARTIN DURSSE
For The Daily Astorian

Now seems to be a fitting time to consider the state of K-12 public education in Oregon.

As our representatives meet in Salem to finalize a budget for the next biennium, we should pause to consider a few important facts.

During the first 12 years of their educational career, a student in Oregon will attend school a full year less than the national average. Our class sizes are among some of the largest in the nation.

The decade from 2003 to 2013 saw the K-12 share of the state budget decrease from 44.8 percent to 39.7 percent. In January the co-chairmen of the state Ways and Means Committee, Sen. Richard Devlin and Rep. Peter Buckley, proposed a state school fund (SSF) of \$7.2 billion. That same month, several Clatsop County superintendents, school board members and parents met with Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Deborah Boone to discuss what that level of funding would mean to their respective districts.

The education of our children is an investment in our future.

For the Astoria School District, an SSF of \$7.2 billion would mean reducing our budget by \$118 per student. That equates to larger class sizes, no capital improvement projects, no new math curriculum, and possible staff reductions. This is clearly a step in the wrong direction.

In order to maintain the status quo, the Astoria School District would require an SSF of \$7.5 billion. We would be able to implement full-day kindergarten, but would not be able to offer strategic investments to our Hispanic students and students living in poverty. Helping to close the achievement gap between these students and the rest of our student population is a priority in our district.

Were the Legislature to approve funding at this level, it would merely send a message to the citizens and students of Oregon that an education with the aforementioned shortfalls is totally acceptable.

A more meaningful message, in contrast to both of the previous funding levels, would be to approve



Martin Dursse

a \$7.8 billion SSF. This level of funding would allow for a much more positive impact on our students. Specifically, funding at this level will make it possible for a decrease in class sizes in our K-12 classrooms, provide increased staffing for teaching our English Language Learners and allow for increased Career Technical Education offerings for our high school students.

We would also be able to provide improved building safety through capital improvement projects. The education of our children is an investment in our future. To continually underfund our K-12 schools does a great disservice to our students, their future employers, and our entire community.

Our state legislators have some tough decisions to make this session. Funding our schools at an appropriate level should not be one of those decisions. We cannot afford another round of cuts to our public schools. They must be funded at a level which will allow all of our students to thrive.

The folks in Salem are sometimes quick to point out deficiencies when it comes to test scores, school performance and graduation rates. Maybe it's time to remind them of one simple adage: You get what you pay for.

Open forum

Suggestive sign

I am very disappointed in the graphic image that Annie's Saloon has chosen to place so prominently and unavoidably on Marine Drive. This location means the image will not only greet any tourists entering Astoria from U.S. Highway 30, but it will be seen repeatedly by many of our youngest Astorians as they make the trip to Astor School.

I am not passing judgment on the individuals who patronize this establishment, as adults they are free to do so, but I would prefer that my young daughters remain unaware of what transpires within the building. By replacing the old, much more subtle, sign with the image of a woman in such a sexually suggestive pose, we are introducing the idea of women as objects, and is hardly the image and message we want for our little girls or boys.

It is frustrating that after our efforts to shield our kids from inappropriate sexual images on TV and movies, our kids will now be exposed to this very graphic image every morning riding the school bus to elementary school. Please

consider retuning to the previous signage.

CINDY MAGIE
Astoria

Astoria's best fitness secret

I'm writing to tell you about Astoria's best kept secret for fitness: Clatsop Community College offers a water aerobics class ("Aquatic Fitness") taught by Mary Jo Gruhlkey from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

I have been taking this class from her for the past 24 years. We started at Tapiola Park in the summers, and we had to scrounge for other venues (the KOA, and The Dunes, for example) during the fall, winter and spring months. That is, until the Astoria Aquatics Center opened. Now we are so lucky to have a year-round gig.

Let me tell you about Mary Jo Gruhlkey. She is a certified group fitness instructor, with 25 years of aquatic fitness background. She goes to annual trainings to maintain her certification; for example, last summer she completed "Aquatic Exercise for Rehabilitation and Training" in New York. This class included

instruction on hydro-dynamics and holistic fitness.

"So what the heck is water aerobics?" you ask. Water aerobics is a low-impact sport for all ages. However, you get back whatever you put into it; the harder you work the water, the more you will get out of it. It's great to tone up and it's also a lot of fun.

Gruhlkey has dedicated the last 25 plus years of her life to helping people get fit. Her qualifications also include teaching Pilates, aerobic step and muscle conditioning. She teaches three separate water aerobics classes a week, but the morning classes, 7 to 8 a.m., always fill up fast. Now we are fortunate to have the class offered in the afternoon.

The college charges \$39 per term (next term: March 30 through June 5) and the only other thing that is required is to purchase a punch card or pool pass from the Aquatics Center. You may want to get a pair of water shoes as well.

So hop to it and register for spring term; come have some fun and get fit with us.

JOSIE PEPPER
Astoria

IN GRATITUDE

WINGS takes flight

Re: "Free conference gave local woman WINGS" (*The Daily Astorian*, Feb. 24): The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Astoria and Seaside want to say a big thank you to the EO Media Group for publishing Andrew Tonry's story about Nichole Soares, a 2010 WINGS graduate.

Her front-page story of struggle and triumph resonated with local women who signed up for this year's March 7 WINGS Conference, co-hosted by Clatsop Community College and AAUW. Designed for Women Interested in Going to School, our all-day free conference was attended by more than 50 women this year. They received information on all aspects of returning to school, enjoyed free lunch and child care and edu-

cational benefits to help get them started in the process.

One hundred local businesses and individuals donated money and/or door prizes this year, an outstanding contribution to opening the gateway to a promising and productive future for these women. Undoubtedly, the support we received with front-page stories in *The Daily Astorian*, *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette* facilitated the largesse from our donors and the enthusiastic turnout of the 2015 Women of WINGS. Thank you so much.

ANE MCINTYRE
Gearhart

Thanks from Santa

The Warrenton Community Center Advisory Board held

its annual "Breakfast with Santa" Dec. 20. The breakfast was a great success, and we want to thank the community for their support. We served 173 people.

We would also like to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars Detachment 1228, Lektro Inc., and Starbucks Coffee in

Warrenton, and the Pig 'N Pancake, the Bar Pilots and Ocean Beauty in Astoria for their donations.

Students Jose Contreras, Joey Justice and Asia Lambert from Warrenton High School worked very hard taking breakfast orders and serving the attendees.

Our next breakfast will help the community celebrate the Fourth of July.

FRANK BECKER
Chairman, Warrenton Community Center Advisory Board

Where to write

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• **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D):** 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Web: www.merkley.senate.gov

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