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ONE DOLLAR



Photos by JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Shawna Sykes, from the Oregon Employment Department, discusses statistics revolving around wage inequalities during a panel discussion at the Judge Guy Boyington building Sunday. The panel was presented by the Lower Columbia Diversity Project and the Astoria and Seaside branches of the American Association of University Women.

'This is why I write about elves'

'Get Lit' book fest wraps up with author Q-and-A

By ERICK BENGEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — The novelist Karen Joy Fowler said the "fabulous futurist" Bruce Sterling once fantasized about a Hell for Discarded Characters, where the inhabitants are forced to hold up signs of shame that bespeak their shortcomings: "I was two-dimensional," "I did not advance the plot," etc.

Alas, these condemned creations, unable to justify their existence on the page, were casualties of the writing process, when ideas are abandoned, plot threads are aborted and

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WOMEN CHALLENGE THE GAP

Secretary of state, others discuss wage inequality

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Jeanne Atkins is accomplished. She was the state director for U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and his chief of staff when he was Oregon House speaker. She also managed the women's and reproductive health section at the state Department of Human Services.

But when Gov. Kate Brown asked her to become secretary of state, she said she had the same twinge of self-doubt many women in the workplace experience.

"First thing I went, 'Me?' You know, 'What did I ever do?'" Atkins said Sunday afternoon during a panel discussion on wage inequality by the Lower Columbia Diversity Project at the Judge Guy Boyington Building. "I've done a lot."

"And I tell women to be proud of what they've done and," she paused, "it affects us all in that way."

Atkins — who replaced Brown in March after Brown took over from John Kitzhaber, who resigned amid an influence-peddling scandal involving his fiancée — described unconscious bias as one of the challenges women face at work.

The often invisible, built-in and

unfair perceptions about women could be harder to flush from the workplace than more overt forms of discrimination.

Equal Pay Day

Tuesday is Equal Pay Day, which marks how far into the new year women have to work to make as much as men earned over the previous year. Women who worked full time made 78 percent of what men earned in 2013, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In Clatsop County, the wage gap was wider, with women at 66 percent of men.

"So it's a local problem as well as a national one," Atkins said. "Probably there is no community that's exempt."

With Hillary Clinton, the former U.S. secretary of state, seeking the Democratic nomination for president, and Democrats nationally using the wage gap as a theme against Republicans, wage inequality will likely be a political issue in the 2016 campaign.

The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 prohibited businesses from gender-based wage discrimination against women who hold similar jobs as men. A persistent wage gap, however, has led Democrats to call for legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would limit the reasons for wage differ-

entials to factors such as education, training and experience and bar retaliation against workers who seek or disclose wage information to validate complaints.

Senate Republicans, who claim the legislation would make it difficult for businesses to base compensation on work quality and productivity, have blocked a vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act.

In Oregon, where Democrats control the Legislature, bills are pending that would prohibit disciplinary action against workers who inquire about or disclose wage information and would make gender-based wage discrimination a civil rights violation.

Battling bias

Economists see bias — conscious or unconscious — as one of many factors that contribute to the wage gap, and perhaps a diminishing one.

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Jeanne Atkins, Oregon's secretary of state, gives an update on several wage bills during a panel discussion on wage inequality.

Clatsop County honors givers

County: Citizens gave over 22,000 hours of service in 2014

By The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners honored various citizens with Volunteer of the Year awards Wednesday night during its regular meeting.

The Board of Commissioners also approved a proclamation declaring April 12-18 Volunteer Week in Clatsop County.

In 2014, 631 volunteers provided a total of 22,619 hours of service to the county, a value of \$482,921, according to the county.

The Volunteer of the Year awards recipients are as follows:

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Warrenton Kia helps The Harbor with difficult ride

Some child sexual assault victims taken to Portland for rape exams

WARRENTON — Roxanne Williams-Morinville, the general manager of Warrenton Kia, heard from a friend that The Harbor was in need of reliable transportation.

In rare cases, children under 15 who are victims of sexual assault are driven to Portland for forensic medical exams because expertise is lacking at rural hospitals on the North Coast.



Everyday People

Rather than make the four-hour round trip in a police vehicle, The Harbor wanted to give victims and their families another option.

Williams-Morinville stepped

forward with a discounted 2008 Dodge Caravan. "We felt that it was important that they have something reliable," she said.

Pediatric specialists

Tension exists between social-service advocates, medical experts, police and prosecutors over how best to serve young victims of sexual assault.

Last summer, The Daily Astorian reported on the lack of nurses certified to treat pediatric victims in Clatsop County and other parts of the state after a 10-year-old girl was raped in Astoria. The girl, her mother and a younger sibling were taken by police to a Portland hospital for the rape exam.

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Roxanne Williams-Morinville, the general manager at Warrenton Kia, provided a discounted minivan to The Harbor to help transport child sexual assault victims.

DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

