

Man said he intended to arrest Astoria mayor at council meeting

He says it was planned, not an angry outburst

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Zachary Seidel, the man arrested last week after disrupting an Astoria City Council meeting, said he went to City Hall with the intention of making a citizen's arrest of Mayor Arline LaMear.

The 29-year-old said he has nothing personal against the mayor, but disagreed with how the City Council handled a roughly \$70,000 reimbursement payment to the Friends of the Astoria Column for the nonprofit's work in helping to convince Verizon Wireless to move a communications tower from Coxcomb Hill.

The nonprofit, which includes influential Astoria Column benefactors such as Jordan Schnitzer, a Portland real estate magnate and philanthropist, worked with a telecommunications consulting firm to help persuade Verizon on behalf of the city.

Without going into detail about why he objected to the payment, Seidel said: "There's the issue that I didn't like. And then there's the cover up. The misleading statements. The omissions. Those sorts of things, you know. They just happened."

The soft-spoken Seidel, who stopped by The Daily Astorian Friday to explain the incident, said he had planned to make a citizen's arrest of LaMear but then also tried to arrest Police Chief Brad Johnston after Johnston urged him to leave the council chamber.

"That's what I went there for," he said. "I didn't just get

'It's not a personal issue with [the mayor]. This is following the laws and making sure that we have good governance.'

— Zachary Seidel

angry and try to arrest them all."

Seidel was wrestled to the ground by Johnston after he resisted the police chief's direction. He was charged with criminal trespass, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. He has a court date later this month.

"It's hard to talk about things that are false in a way that they're true," he said of the charges.

Seidel had attempted to speak about the reimbursement payment to Friends of the Astoria Column at the council meeting. The City Council, however, had already taken up the issue before he arrived.

Then-Mayor Willis Van Dusen had informed councilors last year that a payment request would likely be coming before the council. The city had sought for years to

get Verizon to relocate the tower without much success.

City Councilor Drew Herzog asked city staff in May to itemize the payment because he was uncomfortable approving the money without knowing how it was spent.

The nonprofit subsequently requested that a few hundred dollars worth of food-related expenses and some out-of-pocket costs be removed.

The City Council voted unanimously last week to approve the payment. The council also approved a separate contract with the telecommunications consulting firm — Converge Communications of Portland — to continue to work with Verizon on the tower relocation.

City Councilor Russ Warr said he spoke with some at the Friends of the Astoria Column privately who felt

"insulted and incensed" by questions about the reimbursement. The nonprofit has raised more than \$3 million over the years to preserve the Astoria Column.

"I'm a little bit ashamed of us for doing that," Warr told fellow councilors.

Herzog said he did not mean to insult the nonprofit. "I think it would have been easier for us if we had been told up front that we would end up footing the bill for this," he said.

Seidel, meanwhile, said his attempted citizen's arrest of LaMear was not personal. "It's not a personal issue with her," he said. "This is following the laws and making sure that we have good governance."

His message to the community about the incident: "All I really wanted to say is, 'You can't please everyone.'"

Fake orca: Sea lions have caused more than \$100,000 in damage

Continued from Page 1A

Robert Evert, the Port's permit and project manager, said the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife counted around 1,000 sea lions at the basin Thursday, but the number was down to 200 by Friday.

The marine mammals are already migrating from the Columbia River to rookeries in Southern California and northern Mexico to breed. Male California and Steller sea lions migrate to the Pacific Northwest to forage for food, including the recently improved smelt and salmon runs in the Columbia.

The migration, increasing in numbers over recent years, is creating conflicts between locals and the federally protected animals. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has

confirmed that several sea lions have been shot along the North Coast.

Evert said the sea lions went dead silent as the fake orca was put into the water Thursday night with a track of orca calls, leading to the possibility that orca sounds could be used to dissuade the pinnipeds.

The Port also uses brightly colored plastic surveying tape and chicken wire fencing to keep the animals off some docks. In the past, the Port has tried floating beach balls in moorages and laying electrified mats down on the docks to scare away the sea lions.

The animals have caused more than \$100,000 in damage, according to the Port, and have kept the Port from earning money off some docks through vessel moorage.

Daily Astorian, biweeklies take home awards

The Daily Astorian

The Daily Astorian earned eight awards in the Northwest Excellence in Journalism competition sponsored by the Society of Professional Journalists.

The awards, for work published during 2014, were presented Saturday at the annual banquet of the Oregon Territory Chapter of the SPJ in Albany.

Former reporter Chelsea Gorrow earned four awards. She took first place for investigative reporting for a story about how the lack of certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners in Clatsop County affects rape investigations. The story also placed third in the health reporting category.

In the crime and justice reporting category, she placed second for her coverage of how the Clatsop County Jail struggles to house the mentally ill.

She placed third in the short feature-writing category for her story about

how Charles "Chuck" Vanderveldt, who owns a janitorial business, was overcoming adversity.

Gorrow left Astoria to work on the police beat at The Register-Guard in Eugene.

Coast Weekend editor Rebecca Sedlak earned second place in the lifestyles category for her coverage of the "Drugulation" event in Astoria.

Reporter Kyle Spurr earned second place in the government and politics reporting category for covering the commotion which followed Commissioner Dirk Rohne's questioning of County Manager Scott Somers' handling of personnel.

Nancy McCarthy, former editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette, who has retired from those positions and as a full-time Daily Astorian reporter, earned third place in the best local column category.

Her columns covered recollections of the murder of the 2-year-old baby in Can-

non Beach, what nature can teach during a vacation and connections made at Cannon Beach's annual "welcome home salmon" ceremony.

Former Managing Editor Patrick Webb earned second place in the sports feature category for a column he wrote about how health difficulties ended his 29-year soccer refereeing career.

The newspaper competes against daily newspapers with 15 or fewer news staff in Oregon, Washington state, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. The Oregon Territory SPJ chapter covers Oregon and Southwest Washington.

The Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette earned four awards in the competition. The awards included third place in general

excellence for the Seaside Signal.

Reporter Erick Bengel earned two awards for work in the Gazette. He placed second in the lifestyles category for coverage of a citywide miniature golf fundraiser for Tolovana Arts Colony. He placed third in arts reporting and criticism for his coverage of Cannon Beach musician Michael Corry's remix of his "Codger Pole" music CD.

McCarthy earned third place in the government and politics reporting category, for coverage of attempts to unseat Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop.

The newspapers compete against nondaily newspapers in Oregon, Washington state, Alaska, Idaho and Montana.

ODFW warns beachgoers to keep their distance from seals and sea lions

The Daily Astorian

Pacific harbor seal pupping season is in full swing on the Oregon coast. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife advises beachgoers to stay away from seals and sea lions resting on rocks or beaches.

A harbor seal mother often leaves her pup on shoreline rocks or the beach while she feeds in the sea. "The pup isn't stranded, and human activity around it can discourage the female from returning to feed and care for her pup," said Susan Riemer, a marine biologist.

At this time of year, California sea lions are migrating south to breed for the summer, stopping to rest on Oregon beaches. Elephant seals are in

the molting stage right now and may look sick, but molting is a natural process.

Seals and sea lions use beaches as a resting spot when feeling tired or ill, and should be left alone. People should not approach them, or try to

feed or help them. It's important to keep dogs away as well.

If a marine animal is obviously sick or injured, people can call the Oregon State University Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 541-270-6830.

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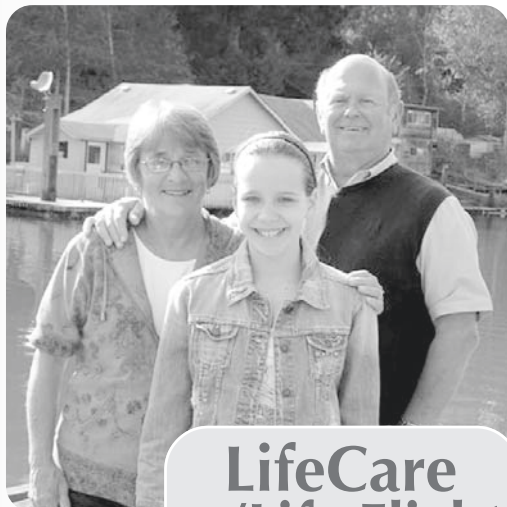
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