



DAMIEN MULINIX — EO Media Group

Once aboard, passengers can choose to stay in their cars or walk around on the ferry, including an enclosed viewing area.

Ferry: It was named after operator of original ferry

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The Oscar B, which went into service earlier this year, is named for Oscar Bergseng, who operated the original ferry seven days a week, 365 days a year for 17 years. A plaque in his honor on the new boat reads, "Oscar was instrumental in the county taking over operation of the ferry in 1961 and continued on as manager until his death in 1985."

Another constant aboard the ferry has been Capt. Ray Peek, who has been piloting the boat back and forth across the Columbia for 32 years. An average shift has him making the run 18 times per day. That is less than he used to with the smaller Wahkiakum, where, if they could not fit every-



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Ferry Capt. Ray Peek pilots the Oscar B back out onto the Columbia River after picking up passengers in Westport.

one onboard, they would have to go back and make a second trip during the same hour — something that has yet to happen with the larger Oscar B. The ferry leaves Puget Island at the top of

each hour from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

"It made it rough, but it was OK. I like the work," said Scott Tomlinson, a part-time deckhand. "This (ferry) is so much nicer. So much

more accommodations for the patrons and all that."

Tomlinson has been working on the ferries for a year and a half.

"I love working on here. It's the best thing I've done since I've been out of the Navy. I like working with this guy. We keep each other entertained," Tomlinson said of Peek, who simply replied, "Yup."

As the ferry pulled back into the dock at the Puget Island terminal, the two men prepared to end their shift after offloading all the passengers. But just like the boat, they'll be back again tomorrow.

"We tease each other all the time. We do what we gotta do, but we still have a good time," Tomlinson said.

Zone: 'I don't think we're selling ourselves out here'

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"An enterprise zone gives us another tool to boost economic development in our local communities," Clatsop County Manager Scott Somers said in a statement. "It can help drive new investment in our industrial properties and increase private-sector economic activity."

The state designation is a policy victory for Somers, who steered the enterprise zone application and stuck with the concept after Astoria, the county's largest city, pulled back.

Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton, who had been an advocate for Astoria's participation, said "definitely I think that there are opportunities that may look elsewhere because Astoria chose to go a different way on this enterprise zone."

The Astoria City Council voted 2-2 in March against the enterprise zone after initially indicating support for the idea. City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill, who recused herself from the vote because her husband is an owner of Fort George Brewery and Public House, which would have been in the enterprise zone, has called the decision to reject the partnership disappointing.

Mixed record

County, Port and Warrenton officials, however, have been cautious not to oversell the value of an enterprise zone.

In Oregon, and across the nation, enterprise zones have had a mixed record. Some economists have questioned whether property tax incentives produce meaningful job growth and have likened the tax breaks to corporate welfare.

An enterprise zone for the Georgia-Pacific Wauna Mill turned into a protracted tax battle that ended in a \$2.5 million settlement with Clatsop County and other taxing districts in 2012.

But economic development advisers believe enterprise zones can help regions stand out when competing for new business.

Warrenton City Commissioner Henry Balensifer said an enterprise zone is a tool for economic growth, not "a solve-all."

Balensifer stressed that property taxes make up only a fraction of the city's budget, so temporary tax breaks to help attract business would not undercut the city's finances.

Warrenton hopes the enterprise zone might help convince Pacific Coast Seafoods to rebuild a fish processing plant that burned down in 2013.

"It's important we bring them back," Balensifer said. "If Pacific Coast Seafoods is the only thing that really takes advantage of it, and the enterprise zone helped them do that, I would consider it a success."

"I don't think we're selling ourselves out here."



Stephen C. Fulton



Henry Balensifer

Culling: Island also acts as a nesting ground for a massive colony of Caspian terns

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In the depredation permit record of decision by USFWS there is a stipulation that states, "Management actions could cease temporarily if dispersal of double-crested cormorants is 70 percent or less than the expected abundance one week after implementation of culling or egg oiling events."

They have not hit that threshold yet, Winters said. The pause now is due entirely to nesting birds.

Given the Corps' late start, already deep in the nesting season, the Audubon Society of Portland had worried that contractors would kill parents with chicks and that those chicks would later die from starvation and exposure, thus increasing the impact of the take.

Winters and Echols said there is "no particular expectation for this season and no speculation on how it will end either."

There are no weekly goals or limits, and, Echols said, there is still time for contractors to shoot adult birds before the colony finishes nesting and leaves.

The Audubon Society of Portland tried to put an immediate stop to this year's shooting in May. This injunction was denied, but a lawsuit filed by the Society against the Corps, Fish and Wildlife Service and APHS is still moving forward.

East Sand Island also acts as a nesting ground for a massive colony of Caspian terns, which are managed by the Corps under a separate management plan.

Sandcastle: Wabi Sabi found redemption in win

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"We've come back from the depths," said Wabi Sabi's Eric Hawley.

The team, comprised of members from across Washington state, combined detail and finesse, art and architecture. At 15-feet-high, their castle was the tallest of the day. It was accompanied by an octopus, a mermaid and a shell cupping the earth, and fronted by a treasure chest bearing the theme: "The World is Your Oyster. Treasure It."

Against the six others in the Masters division, Wabi Sabi's entry was a crowd-pleaser, as visitors gathered close to watch the team at work. The builders obliged with additional showmanship, at one point breaking from sand-shaping into dance.

"Our motto is: if you're not here to have fun then, why are you here?" Hawley said. "We want the people to have fun. We want everyone here to come back and see us."

As much as it was a fan favorite — and the team took that award as well — so too were the judges enamored with Wabi Sabi's creation. The four-first place votes were unanimous. All contestants were judged not only on the finished product, but also teamwork, creativity and more.

"All of us came up with No. 1 separately," Masters judge Robin Risley said. "The use of the space, the detail, the teamwork, crowd excitement, the energy that they created — that was the one!"

Comeback

With the win, Wabi Sabi found a bit of redemption.

"The last couple of years we haven't done well," Hawley said. "We brought some organization back to our group and worked a lot of things out, and now we're cutting sand like we used to. We've been champions before, and to come back and be champions again feels great."

The team, Hawley said would split the winnings. "We're going to drink beer," he chuckled. "We've got IPAs with our name on them!" Hawley's good spirits extended to competitors, spectators and even the event organizers.



ANDREW R. TONRY — For EO Media Group

Wabi Sabi's sandcastle project took first-place in the Masters contest. More photos online at www.dailyastorian.com

'No lost kids'

"Everything went really smooth, actually," Sandcastle Contest Chairwoman Debbie Nelson said.

"Turnout was less than last year," she added. "Last year was our 50th anniversary and we expected a massive crowd. We're guesstimating about 10,000 in attendance this year. Last year it was close to 30,000."

Rather than disappointment, the dip in attendance made for a more tranquil event.

Of particular relief to Nelson and her logistical team was that, for the first time in years, no young children were separated from their parents.

"I think that's a record!" Nelson said. "No lost kids this year! So that was great. That's why it's so calm, there's no sense of panic."

Indeed, when held up against the 50th anniversary's overwhelming crush of spectators, the 2015 contest was relatively serene, both on the beach and throughout the town. And while the crowds may have been thinner, they were still stacked rows deep around the seven Masters division plots.

Masters teams

Inside the ropes, competition was as fierce as ever.

"We had eight Master teams last year, and seven this year," Nelson said. "I think eight might be the most we've ever had."

"It's been great to have all of that enthusiasm again, because a lot of people really come to see the Masters," she added.

One of those teams, the Jessop family from Independence,

offered an added buzz as they were being followed by television cameras from Oregon Public Broadcasting, filming for an upcoming episode of Oregon Field Guide on the Sandcastle Contest.

"It's been interesting," said son Raymond Jessop of being trailed by the cameras. "They came up and followed us on a practice in April for one day."

At first, it didn't go well. "Everything fell down that day," Jessop said. "And then they came up and interviewed us yesterday, and they've been poking cameras in our face all day. But it's been a fun experience."

The Jessops suffered another bit of bad luck at the contest when two bridges between sandcastles collapsed only five minutes before the final bell sounded.

"I'm a little disappointed about the arches falling," Jessop said. "But that's kind of just the way it goes."

"I think a lot of it is the sun and the wind today," he added. "We did one practice sculpture on Tuesday that was maybe two or three inches wider than the one that fell, and it held for about nine hours. Today it was really just bad luck, to some degree."

Still, the Jessops, whose sculpture depicted the boardgame LIFE, quickly cleaned up the fallen bridges and managed a third-place finish, behind the Form Finders. While the official acknowledgment and the \$400 check were no short shrift, the Jessop's d participation was about more than just awards.

"That's really just a consolation prize to us," he said. "It's

more of family time. We don't get a whole lot of time to just spend a whole week goofing off. So it's special."

This year the Jessop team fielded four siblings, wives, cousins, as well as Mom and Dad. They've been competing for the last seven years, and five in the Masters Division.

"Mom was looking for something to keep us busy a couple years ago," Jessop said. "Me and my next younger brother were just moving out of the house, so she was also looking for something to get us to come back home occasionally. So this was her idea. It's worked so far. It's got us back every single year since."

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