

## Inspiring story

I enjoyed reading the inspiring article about Drew Lynch (“Indiana native chases new dream after injury derails plans,” The Daily Astorian, June 21)). I have heard of other people started to stutter after an injury. In my own personal opinion, I think that some people carry the stuttering genes without having any difficulty; sometimes an injury can trigger those genes which have been recessive, in my own view.

If Drew Lynch makes it as an actor/comedian, he will be in good company. The website of the non-profit Stuttering Foundation (www.stutteringhelp.org) has a list of “Famous People Who Stutter” which features prominent names such as Bruce Willis, Marilyn Monroe, Tom Sizemore, Nicole Kidman, James Earl Jones, Eric Roberts and many others.

EDWARD HERRINGTON  
Longmeadow, Mass.

## Wonders of Oregon

U.S. Sen Ron Wyden completed his Wonders of Oregon tour on the Oregon Coast in Astoria, and it was my pleasure to accompany him throughout the state. Wyden is a champion of Oregon’s public lands and access to them. He appropriately calls them “treasures.”

The seven Wonders of Oregon are natural treasures, created without help from us. However, they would not be what they are today if it were not for programs and policies that Americans have put in place to protect public lands.

The Oregon coast is a magnet. People are drawn here by the beauty of its rugged beaches and its natural wonders. It contains hundreds of places that have been protected by a little-known program called the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

From local ballfields and city parks, to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, Yaquina Head, and Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, LWCF has invested millions of dollars into public lands on the Oregon Coast, helping protect and keep them accessible to all for generations to come.

LWCF uses no taxpayer money — only offshore gas royalty fees. It expires in September, and we need Congress to reauthorize it in its current form if we’re to continue investing in public lands. America’s public lands are the envy of the world. They are available to all. It’s crucial to hunters, anglers, hikers, birdwatchers, and all outdoor enthusiasts that they stay that way.

## Reserved parking means just that

I know parking in the downtown area is tight, that is why I rent a parking spot. It is aggravating to find someone in my parking spot, especially when I am trying to get to work. Almost every time it is a local, not a visitor. I have to go into all the surrounding businesses to try to find that person, to not have them towed.

So I thought I should inform everyone what a reserved space means. These are not inexpensive to rent, and those who rent the parking spots work long hard hours to afford these spaces. We rent them for 24 hours a day — some of us work nights and weekends. I repeat, the reserved spaces are for 24 hours a day. Every day. You do not get to park in them

after 6 p.m., or on the weekends.

Please have some respect for the locals who rent these spots. Please. You know who you are. Yesterday, I had a girl in a Regatta princess costume inform me (she was in my parking spot) that she parks in the parking lot all the time. Sigh.

VICKI MCAFEE  
Astoria

Some in Congress have proposed selling our public lands to pay off the deficit, but public lands support local economies and our outdoor heritage. In Oregon alone, Travel Oregon estimates outdoor recreation supports over 100,000 jobs. Public lands are the heart of that economy. We need to keep public lands in public hands.

Some in Congress have also proposed amending the Antiquities Act to limit the president’s authority to establish national monuments. Presidents from both parties have used this law to establish some of America’s most notable public lands and any compromise would be a disservice to Americans now, and in the future.

We thank Sen. Wyden for being a champion of public lands.

BRIAN JENNINGS  
State coordinator, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Bend

## Need a bypass

Open letter to the Seaside City Council, the Seaside Planning Department, the Seaside Downtown Business Association, the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, Clatsop County, and the Oregon Department of Transportation: Shame on you. You have consistently abused the very people who supply the income for the city.

The primary source of money for the city of Seaside is the tourist, most of whom travel over U.S. Highways 26 and 101 to bring their cash to you. I live about three miles out on Highway 26, or seven miles from the center of Seaside. On any given holiday weekend, or when a special event is happening in the area, traffic gets backed up all the way out past my house. I just experienced the backup first hand, trying to get from Astoria to my home, it took over 2.5 hours to get from the Great Wall restaurant in Gearhart to my house, a total of about 10 miles.

To the best of my knowledge, there is currently no plan, or even discussion, of building a bypass east of Seaside so that the people who wish to get to Fort Stevens, Long Beach, Wash.,

or other points beyond Seaside, can avoid the horrendous gridlock.

I have heard some local business people say that they want the extra traffic. Trust me; people who are stuck in a lineup, literally for hours, are not going to stop at your place of business, unless that is their primary destination. I can imagine the family emotional atmosphere, after they have endured 2 mph travel for an hour or two.

Several years ago they built a bypass around downtown Cannon Beach. That town is flourishing. Is there really a logical reason that there is not at least a design on the drawing board to build a new highway, east of Seaside, with three to four access exits to the city?

I do not live within the city limits of Seaside, so I can say in your planning, but it amazes me how poorly you continually treat the tourists traveling to and through your city.

CLEVE ROLFE  
Seaside

## Not a success

Phil Knight is no exemplar of “success” in my book (“Nike co-founder Knight will step down as chairman,” The Daily Astorian, June 30). If he’d made his fortune manufacturing cool shoes in Baltimore, Detroit, Cleveland or Portland, then he would be. And maybe then an international trade deal modeled upon Nike would deserve our support.

He doesn’t, and it doesn’t. Getting filthy rich in this country doesn’t require or connote character or even brains. For further proof, there’s Donald Trump.

JOSEPH WEBB  
Astoria

## Great support

We would, once again, like to thank the many supporters that we have within the local community. We are continually in receipt of many great items that have been gently used by the previous owners, and then donated to our shop for resale to someone else in need of that item at reasonable prices.

The list of people who have made these donations

would go on for pages — however, suffice it to say that if you are looking for anything from an Allen wrench to a xylophone (not currently in stock), chances are that it has been donated. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many loyal customers who make us their first go-to location when seeking out items for their remodel or update. Additionally, people, even within our own community, are continually finding our shop.

We receive visitors from as far away as Maine and even some from England, Germany, and Japan. For those within the community who are still unaware, PennyWise Thrift Store, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization supporting those living with mental illnesses, is located at 737A E. Harbor Drive in Warrenton.

We would like to thank Bethany Lutheran Church for allowing us to distribute the lunches that they prepare for the homeless and underserved youth in the local community. We feel that we are truly blessed to be able to provide this important resource to those we serve.

We would also like to thank the many who make cash donations of from 50 cents to more than \$100 to help support our transitional housing (also located in Warrenton) and our mental illness support group, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of North Oregon and South Washington Coast, a local chapter of the DBSA. It is heartening to see that our local community is recognizing the fact that there is a lack of adequate mental health facilities and services within our county, and are willing to step up and say “enough is enough.”

PETER AND PATRICIA FESSLER  
Co-owners, PennyWise Thrift Store  
Co-facilitators DBSA of North Oregon and South Washington Coast  
Astoria

## Sympathy and ideas

I just finished reading the article about the young girl who drowned last year off the Bolstad approach

and would like to offer my heartfelt sympathy to this family. The beach can be such a fun place that sometimes it is easy to overlook the dangers that go along with such beauty.

As I try to imagine how I would feel if I lost my 10-year-old daughter to a tragedy like this, it just makes me numb to think of what these people are going through.

I have spent my entire life recreating in the area and my parents warned me about the dangers as a child some 45 years ago as a child, I passed those warnings to my child and when we are at our place in Surfside and my daughter wants to play in the surf I keep a close eye on her and am always on the alert for dangers.

I have said things to people on the beach about swimming and watching their kids and have been met with less than appreciative comments, it does not stop me from trying to educate people on the dangers of playing in the surf.

I think it would be beneficial to put some sort of information with check in hotel info and maybe some bigger signs for people who are not as tuned in to the dangers of our coast.

To the family of the girl who drowned, I sincerely hope things get better for you and though I am sure it has been suggested maybe join a support group or seek out help from your local church so you don’t have to shoulder this alone.

Again I am truly sorry for your loss.

PAUL PETTIGREW  
Surfside/Vancouver

## Cleanup the cleanup

Since joining the Long Beach (Wash.) Peninsula community a few years ago I have been involved with the Grass Roots Beach Cleanup gang, most recently with the Friends of Willapa Refuge, helping to keep their designated section of beach off Cranberry approach clean. Every July 5, we dutifully sweep behind the visitors from the valley and clean up after them, content that our small effort contributes to overall health of our beach, and continued livability for us locals.

This year, I have my doubts. I think our efforts

are only encouraging an increase in the illegal activity that local agencies say they cannot enforce. Like my neighbors who sell fireworks when fires are necessarily banned, and those who sell both legal and illegal fireworks, we are sending a message that says “Come to our beach and do whatever you want. By gosh, we need your money so bad we will let you trash our environment and disturb our peace. Don’t worry, we will clean up after you, and be sure and bring more friends next year.”

A real eye opener occurred for me when, at the request of a friend, I took my new aerial camera to the Long Beach Bolstad approach in hopes of taking some pictures of trash, before the cleanup began. The sight shocked me to the bone. Tents and campfires for as far as the eye can see laid before my elevated lens. I posted the photos on Facebook and discovered that my dismay was shared. Many of us who live on the northern half of the peninsula were surprised at the extent our complacency has progressed. I know this isn’t original, but “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!” And everyone who saw this should feel the same way.

I think that if all of us who clean the beach after visitors trash it put in as much effort opposing illegal activities, and possibly banning fireworks all together, we wouldn’t have to clean the beach.

There are two main reasons nothing gets done. Local merchants, including the nonprofits who profit from fireworks sales, cry they will lose money, people won’t come to the beach. And local officials insist they do not have the manpower to enforce the laws.

When I lived in Westlake, south of Florence, the local merchants passed the hat and put on a tremendous public fireworks display that attracted tourists from all over. If we were to do the same thing, and donate the money to the nonprofits who sell fireworks, they could put on a display that would attract the crowds they desire.

We must realize and accept that we are part of a delicate ecological system here on the peninsula, and people will come here for that reason alone. Let’s invite the world to come to the peninsula and celebrate our ecological uniqueness with the best fireworks displays in outwest Washington, and the cleanest beach on the entire West Coast.

BOB DUKE  
Nahcotta

# In defense of Madonna and her farm in the Hamptons

Madonna, the Queen of Pop, is a farmer. As with most of her ventures, her entry into agriculture is not without controversy.

There’s a 24-acre plot next to the Material Girl’s estate in the Hamptons, the chic enclave for the rich and famous at the outer end of New York’s Long Island.

She bought it for \$2.2 million.

Which would have been a steal in those environs, had local governments not purchased the development rights from the Grabowski family, who once grew potatoes there, in 2010 for \$10 million. The land came with restrictions that keep Madonna from building, and require that the property be used for “production for commercial purposes of agricultural products.”

Last year, planning officials approved her plans to create a nursery, and recently crews have been planting Leyland Cypress, eastern white pines and Robusta juniper. That crop will reduce the tax bill on the parcel to less than \$2,300. If she has \$10,000 in sales over two years, the bill drops to under \$300.

So Madonna is a nurseryman and her neighbors don’t like it.

According to the tabloids, critics around Suffolk County, including some farmers, think it’s all a sham. They note that had the original owners sold the property with all rights in tact, the acreage would have sold for \$17.5 million and the tax bill would have been north of \$150,000 a year.

Madonna, they say, is stealing from local taxpayers — her fellow millionaires. Besides, they claim she isn’t really planting a nursery, she’s building a forest to block the view from the road to her estate.

Here we rise to Madonna’s defense. These development easements are a common tool that has become ever more popular in the West to keep land in farm or forest. The town made the original deal to keep the land from being sliced up for more mansions.

The Grabowski family accepted the town’s offer and must have agreed with its goals. Whether she’s an honest farmer or a wealthy star who can afford to guard her privacy, Madonna paid the



Photo by Evan Agostini/Invision/AP, File  
Madonna arrives at The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating “China: Through the Looking Glass,” in New York May 4.

family a bundle for a piece of land that came with some fairly restrictive covenants that prevent her from exploiting its true economic potential.

As long as all parties make their choice freely, we think

these type of deals are a perfect way for farmers to realize the value of their property while keeping it in some type of productive use.

One might legitimately argue that agriculture property



Photo by John Shearer/Invision for iHeartRadio/AP Images  
Madonna performs on stage at the iHeartRadio Music Awards at The Shrine Auditorium March 29 in Los Angeles.

tax breaks should go only to “real” farmers producing true commercial crops. We could go for that. But until then, Madonna and thousands of other landed gentry who meet the statutory requirements are

entitled to whatever tax benefit their state allows.

A thin premise on which to base an editorial, but likely our only chance to feature Madonna on these pages.

— Capital Press