

Downtown association honored for efforts

The Daily Astorian

Dulcye Taylor, a volunteer board president with the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, won Volunteer of the Year at Oregon Main Street's semiannual conference Wednesday in The Dalles.

Taylor, who owns Old Town Framing Company in downtown Astoria, has been involved with the downtown association's board since 2009.

"Dulcye is a connector of people and ideas, and goes the extra step to see them through," Alana Garner, the executive director of the downtown association, said in a release Wednesday. "Dulcye never rests, and is never satisfied with less than what she believes downtown Astoria deserves."

Oregon Main Street, a program under the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, works with cities to develop revitalization strategies for downtown cores. The award taken by Astoria honors the best downtown retention or business recruitment program.

"We are thrilled to present this award to Dulcye Taylor," Sheri Stuart, Oregon Main Street coordinator, said in the release. "Dulcye was a critical player in rebuilding the organization to a point where it can once again support a full-time paid staff person. Dulcye's fingerprints can be found on countless programs, events, and efforts of ADHD, including restoration of the organization's Performing Main Street status after a hi-



JEFF DALY — For The Daily Astorian

Dulcye Taylor, who emceed this year's Jane Barnes Revue as Cal E. Bratton, won the Volunteer of the Year Award at Oregon Main Street's semiannual conference in The Dalles Wednesday.

atus of more than 20 years; receiving accreditation as a National Main Street Program; and increasing the level of city funding allocated to the organization on an annual basis."

NEDTalks

NEDTalks, the downtown association's series of informational presentations on creating a healthy downtown core, won an Excellence in Downtown Revitalization Award as the "Best Business Development Project" at the conference.

The downtown association's business development committee began the merchant-focused series of

NEDTalks, short for Novel Efforts Downtown, as a spin on the popular TEDTalk lectures. The talks, which are free, open to the public and available on the downtown association's website, address current issues or trends and provide a forum for open dialogue and discussion.

"The level of engagement from the downtown businesses on the tips and tricks they have learned from the NEDTalks has been great," Garner said in a separate release Wednesday. "We have received so many positive remarks for the enlightening and rewarding information sharing with the community and businesses."

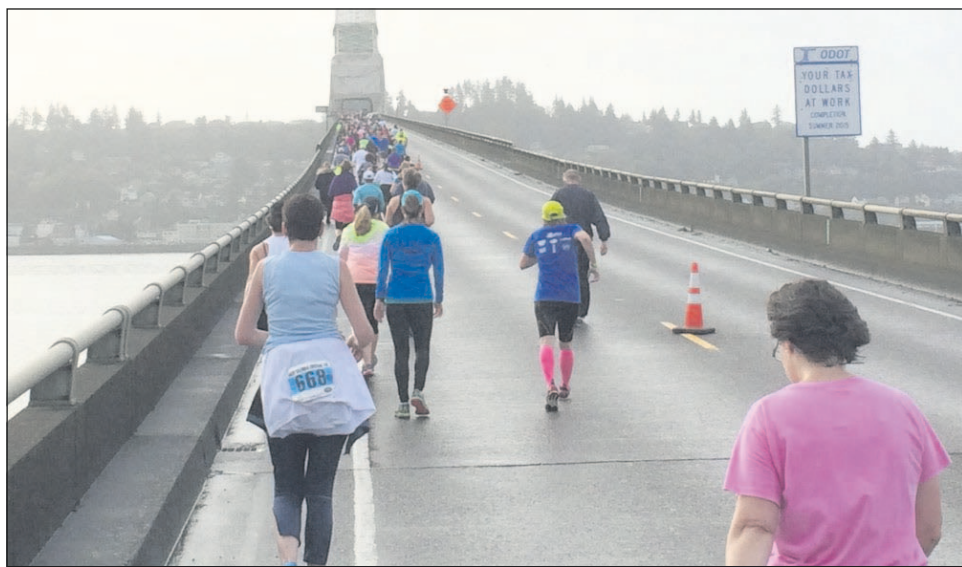


Photo courtesy of Diane Taylor

Runners and walkers start the climb up the Astoria Bridge in the Great Columbia Crossing event last year.

Heavy traffic expected for Great Columbia Crossing

The Daily Astorian

The Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce Great Columbia Crossing 10K event is Sunday morning. More than 3,000 event participants and volunteers are involved in this once-a-year opportunity to cross the Astoria Bridge on foot.

Traffic changes and delays are expected to occur between 6 and 11:30 a.m.

Heavy traffic is expected around the Bridge begin-

ning at 6 a.m., as participants arrive for the event. Shuttle buses to the starting area begin operating by 7 a.m., creating a steady flow of vehicles on the bridge. At approximately 8:30 a.m., vehicle traffic starts being guided by a pilot car in alternating directions, using one lane of the bridge. Due to the reduced speed on the bridge during this time, vehicles may wait up to 45 minutes to cross.

Traffic flow should be

back to normal shortly after 11 a.m., when the participants are cleared from the bridge.

Drivers are urged to be prepared for delays, and to either avoid unnecessary trips on the bridge during this time or to be aware of the extra time needed for the trip.

For information, contact the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce at 503-325-6311 or go to www.greatcolumbiacrossing.com

Burn ban still in effect

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Department of Forestry has issued a reminder that fire restrictions are still in effect.

Recreationists are required to carry a shovel and either a 2.5 pound fire extinguisher or 1 gallon of water

when traveling on forest roads.

"Local residents are only allowed to have campfires in designated campgrounds or on personal property where ODF has granted a waiver," ODF Protection Unit Forester Neal Bond cautioned. "Until we get a line of

storm fronts off the coast, fire season will remain in effect."

The countywide burn ban for outdoor debris burning is still in effect. The public will be notified of any changes. Contact a local rural fire department or the ODF at 503-325-5451 for any questions about burning.

Kumoricon: A welcoming home for area nerds

Local woman finds success and acceptance in the world of anime

By KATHERYN HOUGHTON
EO Media Group

NAHCOTTA, Wash. — On an average day in Nahcotta, Steffi Thomas can be found working as a residential advisor for Job Corps in blue jeans and with her long black hair falling to her waist. But in the growing world of anime, she's a champion.

In September, Thomas stood in front of 6,000 people as the intermediate cosplay winner for the 2015 Kumoricon Convention, which judges how well candidates embody a selected character.

Her hair was pinned under a short gray wig with bangs that wrapped around her face. She stood tall in wooden Japanese sandals and her body was covered in layers of red, yellow and gray fabric — a look that took 275 hours to make.

"Convention is for nerds of any variety to be whoever they want," Thomas, 26, said. "We don't know each other, but we know we all have a common love that's not always understood in our hometowns."

Expanding anime culture

When the anime gathering first began in 2003, only 419 people showed. By the

time Thomas joined in 2005, roughly 1,600 people attended. (Anime is the Japanese word for animation, often involving fantasy worlds that blend Japanese folklore and popular culture.)

In recent years, the annual event has hosted more than 6,000 people. It's expected to move from hotels in Vancouver, Washington, to the Oregon Convention Center to fit the crowds.

Kumoricon won't be alone. Two new conventions began this year in Eugene, and one in Portland.

Convention Chair Phillip Koop said conventions are growing because mainstream society has "gone comic."

"Geeks were viewed as basement dwellers who collected comic books and had questionable character," he said. "But today, everyone has seen 'Spider-Man' and loves the idea of a Lois Lane."

Today, the geek could be the person in the cubicle next to you who grew up watching Cartoon Network, he said.

While nerd culture is more acceptable, Koop said it wouldn't be OK to hop on a bus dressed in cosplay anytime soon.

Finding friends among costumes

Thomas' best friends are



Katheryn Houghton/EO Media Group

Cosplay enthusiast Steffi Thomas prepares to put on a wig by pinning up her hair.

screen names coming from places like Oregon, Japan and Sweden. Conventions are the main place she can gather with people who love the world she picked.

"We've all been bullied in some way — for me it was just being ignored," she said. "But at

Kumoricon, being into anime is the normal thing."

Her close friend, Ian Jefferson, said in the five years they've known each other, he's seen Thomas out of costume once.

"It's hard to imagine her in normal clothes," Jefferson, 30, said. "I see her as whatever

er character she needs to be in that moment."

Thomas snacked on yogurt, candy corn and hot cocoa as she talked about the character she choose, Kanata — one of the main characters of Trinity Universe who was the Demon God King until he rejected his father's evil ways.

"I liked him 'cause he's a goofball," she said. "The first chat I ever saw about him



Katheryn Houghton/EO Media Group

Thomas took 275 hours to make the layered costume. Even with help, getting the costumes according to Japanese custom takes about 30 minutes.

said he loved pizza and naps — that's lovable."

The character allowed her to tap into her outgoing side, something she said most people never get to see.

Nerd culture

Amanda Brian, 26, had only been to one convention when she met Thomas.

"Conventions drew me in because they are a culture of storytelling, art, and education," Brian said.

Hundreds of attendees hold panels ranging from character Q&A's to public-speaking lessons.

Brian thought Thomas was timid, until she attended her Shakespearean Voice and Acting panel. "She owned it," Brian said. "It's the like-mindedness of this place. Whatever it is you want to call yourself, you're accepted."

When the judges called Thomas' name as the winner and the room began to clap, Thomas didn't move. Brian had to pull her on stage to accept the award.

"She was recognized for her amazing work in a room of thousands — it shocked her," Brian said. "It feels like we are coming into the generation of nerds. They aren't wearing name tags saying 'Hi, I'm nerd 645,' but they are everywhere."

A tribute to Sharnelle Fee



A celebration of life for Sharnelle Fee, founder and director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast

Saturday, October 10th at 3 p.m.

at the Warrenton Community Center
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In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Wildlife Center of the North Coast

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