

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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Here's to our newcomers

New blood brings imagination, networks and financial resources

Astoria's rebirth has been so widely reported that leaders and residents of other Oregon cities wonder how it happened. One can tell them about the pivotal role of civic leadership, willing funders and unconventional lenders such as Craft 3. But at bottom, the essential ingredient of Astoria's comeback has been new blood.

Monday's edition began a two-week series titled Our New Neighbors. It is a simple concept in which our reporters describe people who have moved into our region over the past year. We ask these people what brought them here, as well as what they do in their new hometown.

In the first year we did this series, some 25 years ago, our reporters scratched to find people for their cameos. Now, of course, there are many more newcomers. Among those you will see in this series are a couple from India who settled in Warrenton and opened a store and Providence Seaside Hospital's new chief operating officer.

In any organization, newcomers are essential, because they arrive without the burden of conventional wisdom. They don't necessarily accept time-honored barriers to change. Of younger entrepreneurs it is often said that they were too young to know you couldn't do

what they accomplished. In other words, it is all about imagination.

New blood is also important because it brings experience and real-life lessons from other places. These people often have connections with the funding world of philanthropy and grantmaking. That is essential because public and nonprofit projects these days inevitably are partnerships involving players in several locations. Building relationships with those partners is all about networking. Networks are what a newcomer frequently brings us.

Talent and imagination are essential to running private sector businesses in a time of such dramatic economic and cultural change. That is no less true for the aggregate of enterprises and families that we call community. In the words of Richard Florida, it is the creative class that makes cities vibrant. Here's to our new neighbors in 2015 and 2016.

Rebuilding teacher corps starts with raises

Caught between stagnant salaries, rising housing costs and blame for low test scores, the teaching profession is showing signs of strain in the Pacific Northwest.

An issue that's receiving much attention in Washington state, a mismatch between the need for teachers and ready applicants, is becoming a nationwide problem.

The teaching profession was hammered in the Great Recession as federal and state agencies axed support for education. Teaching positions were cut, burdens increased for teachers whose jobs survived, and salaries were frozen — in some cases for years. All this was mirrored in the private sector. But society rightly attaches enormous importance to making sure children are well-educated, and this goal is in the hands of teachers. Retaining good ones and attracting new ones is a prime part of national success.

A survey in Washington recently found "46 percent of principals from rural schools said they still had vacant classroom teaching positions. Only 40 percent, 45 percent and 53 percent of principals in elementary, middle and high schools successfully filled all teaching positions, respectively," according to the *Yakima Herald*.

Locally, the *Chinook Observer* reported this week that a promising program to help students reach their grade level in reading and math is being hobbled by the inability to fill teaching jobs.

"When the economy improves and job prospects multiply, college students turn their attention else-

where, to professions that promise more money, more independence, more respect," a *New York Times* columnist noted in August.

To some extent, the teacher shortage is a normal aspect of the labor market, in which new college graduates are tending to take jobs in higher-paying technology fields. As the economy and government revenue continue to improve, teacher compensation also will rise and again attract more interest from job seekers.

But in other ways, we are seeing a bigger and harder-to-fix problem. Burdened with debt from college loans and faced with historically expensive and scarce housing in the Pacific Northwest, many who might otherwise be attracted to teaching simply can't afford to join or stay in the profession.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is proposing significant raises for teachers. This certainly is a supportable idea. Beyond this, it's time to take a close look at providing public support for partial tuition waivers, more scholarships and other measures to level the playing field for graduates who want to teach. School districts and cities may need to take a page from the distant past by helping teachers with housing.

Teaching can be a good-paying career in comparison to other rural options. Jealousy among other citizens sometimes constrains school board options. But we need to put such small-mindedness behind us if we want our children to have the best preparation for intellectually demanding jobs that pay good wages today.

Loving Lucy, the Christmas pup

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

By R.J. MARX



We haven't had a lot of dogs over the years. Never more than two at a time.

Our last Christmas dog was Rinaldo.

It is our wont to go Christmas week to the shelter to give our donation. But there's no such thing as "just a trip" to the shelter. Every visit can be heart-wrenching.

We weren't prepared at the time to take in Rinaldo. We knew we couldn't get a big dog that would intimidate our old, crippled Lhasa Apso, Basil, who was most likely overbred and as a result has a curved front leg that makes veterinarians take snapshots for their files. We knew we couldn't get a dog that would scare off our two cats. But we hadn't expected this sad-eyed old man.

The shelter had placed him in the cat area because he was so small, an older Chihuahua, shivering even in his light blue wrap in the cold of New York winter. He looked up hopefully with dark eyes, knowing that his second chances were perhaps coming to an end. We heard his story: he had been rescued from a "kill" shelter in Brooklyn, N.Y., the meanest of the mean streets. Who turns in a 6-pound Chihuahua to be euthanized? He was almost toothless, about 8, though some vets thought he was already a bit older.

We asked to see him out of the crate. We walked around the shelter property, the sound of other dogs barking and pleading. He quickly peed on the ground and then looked up at us hopefully.

He curled up in our arms as we held him that cold post-Christmas day. There was no way we were going to walk out of there without him.

In the weeks and months to come we speculated how he could have ended up with this fate. Like any Chihuahua, he was fearful and didn't like to be poked or disturbed. He growled while wagging his tail and licking your hand.

Rinaldo and Basil settled in together, two "Odd Couple" rescues, neither quite the romping dog on the beach or the puppy you envision in the pet food commercials. But when we came West



R.J. Marx photo/Seaside Signal

Lucy found a new home and we found a new friend.

last spring, they rode shotgun across I-90, Rinaldo in his wool doggy sweat-shirts and Basil, his long coat of hair keeping him warm on a perch on a pile of duffel bags on the back seat.

Since coming to the North Coast, we've fallen in love with the Clatsop County Animal Shelter. Volunteers from throughout the county spend countless hours supporting the care and feeding of these pets, including Clatsop Animal

Assistance, Susie's Senior Dogs and the thrift shop, beneficiary of the Seaside Rotary Club's largesse this fall.

We've scanned their ads and vowed we would take in another older dog. After all they do make the best pets: they are well-trained and loving, smart and oh so appreciative of all that we can give them. Our plan was to nurture Basil and Rinaldo in their senior years, and then to pay a visit to the shelter. At adoption day in Cannon Beach earlier this year we fell in love La-La, an adult Chihuahua who had both the right amount of sympathy and spunk to fit into our house. Three dogs, though? How could we?

So there we were out for a Sunday drive, back from a stroll in Cannon Beach and an Americano at Sleepy Monk, pulling out of Seven Dees trying to find the perfect holiday tree. As we drove north on Highway 101 back to Gearhart, we saw the tiny small hand-lettered sign along the road side: Min pin puppies. We drove past and Eve gulped. "A Chihuahua on steroids," is how one miniature pinscher owner had once described his dog to us.

As former New Yorkers, that fit our personalities to a "T."

We passed the entrance and then doubled back around. "Let's stop. Let's just take a look."

The pups were frolicking in an outbuilding behind the main house. They were handsome, healthy dogs. The owner has been breeding for decades.

We got down to the floor and began to play. Of course the strongest were busy wrestling with their brothers and sisters.

A larger 4-month old min pin was herding the group and playing, greeting guests and visitors. But the littlest one was holding back, sitting to the side. The runt of the litter. Sweet, sad eyes, with wrinkly ruffled skin. So tiny you could hold her in your hand, practically a bird.

You guessed it. We brought her home and she is now a proud resident of Gearhart. We spent 24 hours just thinking of a name: Greta, Gretl, Gerte, Athena, Aphrodite, Lola, Lila ... Lucy.

Today Lucy hops around our upstairs with energy and gusto, scrambling to great heights onto a pillow and sometimes missing. She pokes around cabinets and into closets. Right now she is nibbling at my feet.

Basil is kind but shy with her.

As for Rinaldo, it's an amazing transition. This little feisty, toothless street-dog still snarls a bit when Lucy pokes and nibbles at him. He shrugs her off when she skips at his heels. But for an old dog so blind he stands in front of the wrong door to get in the house, he has got a lot of spunk. He is paternal with her. He shows her where to go for the food. And the water. She wants to eat out of Rinaldo's bowl and he is willing to share. At night he wraps his legs around her in the bed. They sleep side by side, spooning. He tells her when to worry, and when everything is all right. He shows her the wee-wee pads and how to use them. She is a brilliant student. She follows him everywhere. The old dog and the new.

An old dog will teach you what you need to know. A puppy will keep you young forever.

R.J. Marx is *The Daily Astorian's* South County reporter and editor of the *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette*.

Food fads: Make mine gluten-full

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — When the federal government's 1980 "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" warned about the baleful effects of saturated fats, public interest activists joined the fight and managed to persuade major food companies to switch to the shiny new alternative: trans fats.

Thirty-five years later, the Food and Drug Administration finally determined that trans fats are not just useless but unsafe, and ordered them removed from all foods. Oops.

So much for settled science. To tell the truth, I never paid much attention to the fat fights in the first place. From my days as a medical student (and prodigious consumer of junk food), I've seen so many solemnly proclaimed "findings" come and go that I decided long ago to ignore — and outlive — them all.

So far, I'm ahead. Never had an egg substitute in my life. I figured trans fats were just another fad waiting to be revoked and renounced. Moreover, if I was wrong, the green eggs and ham would take so long to kill me anyway that I was more likely to be hit by a bus first. Either way, win-win.

Don't get me wrong. I don't advocate this kind of jaunty fatalism for everyone. This is a private affair. I do, however, preach skepticism. Remember that most venerable piece of received medical wisdom — 98.6 degrees as the average adult human

temperature? In 1992, three researchers bothered to measure — and found that the conventional wisdom (based on an 1878 German study) was wrong. Normal is 98.2.

After that — 114 years of error — one is inclined to embrace Woody Allen's "Sleeper" theory that in 200 years we'll discover that smoking is good for you, fruits are not. I still love peaches, but I eat them for the taste — and the memories — not because they might add a month to my life (in the ICU when I'm 90).

I don't mean to be cynical, just realistic. Take fish oil. For at least 10 years the National Institutes of Health has strongly recommended omega-3 fatty acids and fish oil for the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

I held out, trusting both my gastronomic prejudices (more turf than surf) and my faith that time ultimately

undoes all of life's verities. I waited. My omeriness has not been fully vindicated — NIH still recommends dietary fish oil — but it does find omega-3 supplements to be useless.

Exhibit A for medical skepticism, however, remains vitamin C. When Linus Pauling, Nobel laureate in chemistry (not nutrition), began the vitamin-C megadose fad to fend off all manner of disease, the whole thing struck me as bizarre. Yes, you need some C to prevent scurvy if you're seven months at sea with Capt. Cook and citrus is nowhere to be found. Otherwise, the megadose is a crock. Evolution is pretty clever.



Charles Krauthammer

er. For 2 million years it made sure *Homo erectus*, *neanderthalensis*, *sapiens*, what have you, got his daily dose without having to visit a GNC store.

Sure enough, that fashion came and went. But there are always new windmills to be tilted at. The latest is gluten.

Now, if you suffer from celiac disease, you need a gluten-free diet. How many of us is that? Less than 1 percent. And yet supermarket shelves are groaning with products proclaiming their gluten-freedom. Sales are going through the roof.

Another crock. Turns out, according to a massive Australian study of 3,200 products, gluten-free is useless. "The foods can be significantly more expensive and are very trendy to eat," says Jason Wu, the principal investigator. "But we discovered a negligible difference when looking at their overall nutrition."

Told you so. Why then am I not agitating to have this junk taken off the shelves? Because of my other obsession: placebos. For which I have an undying respect, acquired during my early years as a general-hospital psychiatrist. If you believe in the curative powers of something — often encouraged by the authority of your physician — a sugar pill or a glass of plain water can produce remarkable symptom relief. I've seen it. I've done it.

So I'd never mess with it. If a placebo can alleviate your pain, that's better than opioids. If going gluten-free gives a spring to your step, why not? But please, let the civility go both ways. Let the virtuous Fit-bit foodie, all omega-3'd and gluten-free, drop the self-congratulatory smugness. And I promise not to say it's all in his head.

Live and let eat.

If a placebo can alleviate your pain, that's better than opioids.