

word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Wauna

[wəʊ•nə]

noun

1. an unincorporated community in Clatsop County. Located 11 miles west of Clatskanie on U.S. Highway 30 up against the banks of the Columbia River, Wauna is home to the Georgia-Pacific paper mill

2. *Wauna paper mill* (colloq.): Opened in 1965 by Crown Zellerbach, today this paper and pulp mill annually manufactures more than 30 million cases of household paper products, including Brawny paper towels and Angel Soft bath tissue

3. *Wauna Credit Union*: a local financial cooperative with more than 20,000 members that has been based in Clatskanie since 1967

Origin:

Native American, probably Klickitat. *Wauna* was both the name of the Columbia River and the mythological river god that the river represented. *Wauna* is the god featured in the legend of the Bridge of the Gods, which spoke of a great crossing across the Columbia River hundreds of years before construction on the Astoria-Megler Bridge began. The name *Wauna* was applied to the community in Clatsop County by A.W. Clark in 1912 with the establishment of a post office. The post office closed in 1980.

"Georgia-Pacific's Wauna paper mill, which turns 50 this year, remains the largest single employer in Clatsop County, with more than 800 employees."

—Edward Stratton, "Engineers play major role with Wauna: Clatsop County's



Via Wikimedia Commons

Wauna Mill as seen from Bradley State Scenic Viewpoint, just west of Westport.



Photo by Joshua Bessex

Bundler operator Craig Zacher inspects a freshly wrapped package of Brawny paper towels at the Wauna converting plant in April.

largest employer on the hunt for top talent," *The Daily Astorian*, Oct. 9, 2015

"I read with great interest the letter detailing the Koch Brothers ownership connection to the Georgia Pacific Wauna Paper Mill. Being the largest single employer in Clatsop County, this relationship is critical."

—Chris Connaway, "Letter: Kochs attack union," *The Daily Astorian*, May 8, 2015

"There it was, only a short dis-

tance away, a great natural bridge, a rugged bridge of stone, pierced with a wide arched tunnel through which the waters flowed, extending across the river. It was covered with stunted pine and underbrush growing in every nook and crevice; and on it were Indian horsemen with plumed hair and rude lances. It was the bridge of the Wauna, the bridge of the Gods."

—Dewitt Harry, "Bridge of Gods, Born of Indian Lore," *The Sunday Oregonian*, Magazine Section, Oct. 17, 1920, P. 1

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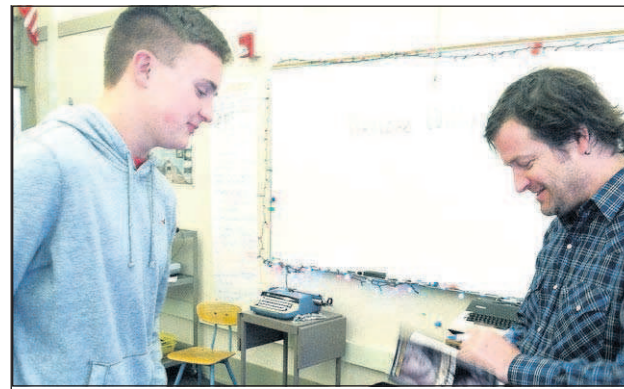


Photo by Matt Love

Oregon author Willy Vlautin, right, signs a copy of his novel "The Motel Life" for a student during a recent visit to Astoria.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

Willy Vlautin

I'm sitting seven feet away from Oregon Book Award-winning author Willy Vlautin. He drove from his home in Scappoose to discuss his novel, "The Motel Life," and the movie adaptation of it with my English Credit Recovery students at Astoria High School's Gray School campus.

My students read excerpts from this extraordinary novel that unfolds the hard-luck story of two orphaned brothers from Reno. We had potent discussions about the brothers' poor choices, loyalty and the quiet courage it takes to not run

away from bad decisions. We also wrote hundreds of words about how "The Motel Life" connected to our lives.

Willy, also the front man and singer/songwriter for the acclaimed Portland rock band Richmond Fontaine, is a riveting storyteller. He holds the class spellbound with the reasons why he created these brothers and how playing football and writing saved him in high school.

The students ask questions. Some of them didn't like the book's ending. Willy explains his reasoning behind it. He ad-

vocates for Willy Nelson, reading, old movies and Dodge Darts. He talks about the differences between writing a novel and playing in a band.

Willy's not here to lecture or reveal the magic nonexistent formula for becoming a successful author and musician who makes a living from his creativity, the very dream many of my students have. He's just suggesting that they "try" at life, that trying can lead to good outcomes. Not trying gets you absolutely nowhere.

Trying is everything. It's the most important lesson these students can hear. It goes beyond a classroom lesson. It's called life. Willy gives my students a glimpse of his unique hard-earned creative life in the most honest of ways — face to face, candid, without affectation or clichés. I like to think they heard him. I did.

When the gig concludes, Willy gives away free copies of "The Motel Life" and signs them for the students. They got to meet a renowned author and shake his hand, an author who was just like them not too long ago ... who started trying.

*Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon. His books are available through coastal bookstores or his web site, nestuccaspitpress.com*

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