

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Initiative will boost local dental outcomes

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of the new childhood dental program, whose funding was announced last week. The Oregon Community Foundation and other funders will pay for programs in 14 regions, including Clatsop County. Edward Stratton reported Wednesday that Providence Seaside Hospital Foundation will be the fiduciary of our county's program. Retired Seaside school administrator Dan Gaffney developed the planning grant for the program and networked with school districts to make it happen.

Five years ago, the foundation's South Coast Council started this program. Gains on the South Coast quickly became obvious. And when Clatsop County teachers and school administrators are surveyed, dental health is the leading reason for school absence in the K-12 years. The economics of health insurance keep a broad swath of children out of the dentist's chair.

As Stratton reported, this program is aimed at elementary and middle school children, where there is hope of addressing dental issues early, with sealant applied by dental hygienists. There will also be an attempt to have local dentists address the remedial needs of these children.

As with virtually every pub-

lic initiative these days, this one involves a number of partnerships. The Oregon Community Foundation's original investment was leveraged to much more, through its links with other funders such as the Collins Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust and the Ford Family Foundation. All four of these charitable organizations long have been active in Clatsop County, where they have funded many physical projects.

Like the renowned and effective Chalkboard Project — which has created innovation in education — the assembled clout of Oregon's major foundations will make a difference in our schools and in the lives of school age children.

And like Chalkboard, this dental initiative likely will grow.

## Legal help can often mean vital lifeline

The legal profession is the subject of a major cover story and related features in this month's *Coast River Business Journal*, included in Friday's edition of *The Daily Astorian*. This attention dovetails well with an Associated Press story this week examining the nationwide lack of legal assistance for poor people in civil cases.

As you will read in *CRBJ*, Clatsop County has a talented pool of lawyers, with a new generation of attorneys beginning to establish a foothold on the coast, often under the initial tutelage of established law firms that have been here for decades. Local lawyers at every stage of their careers are here because the love the people and the place. We're fortunate to have them.

Lawyers do not gravitate to rural areas. As *CRBJ* found, our county has about 12 active attorneys per 10,000 residents, compared to a statewide average of 31 per 10,000.

People make snide remarks about lawyers, but most are honest and hard working. When you need one, you need one very much and appreciate having a good one.

Low-income people often need legal help as much or more than other Americans. As the AP story reports, these cases can involve eviction, foreclo-

sure, child custody, bankruptcy, child custody and involuntary commitment, among other things. In many cases, low-income people feel obliged in civil cases to represent themselves in court appearances and courthouse filings. (Criminal law is a separate issue, with legal counsel generally provided by the state to defendants who face serious consequences.)

Government-funded civil attorneys, such as the Legal Services Corp., currently turn away about a million people a year due to lack of funding. Eighty percent of low-income people in need of civil legal help can't find it.

A few partial fixes are in the works. For example, Seattle University School of Law sponsors a "low bono" program that encourages new graduates to offer legal services for reduced fees to clients in need. ("Low bono" is a play on the Latin term "pro bono publico," which means "for the public good.") Most law firms take on some pro bono cases for needy causes.)

Legislators must take a hard look at finding ways to provide legal help for people who face loss of their children, dwellings and other vital interests. Americans shouldn't have their lives wrecked because they couldn't find a lawyer.

## GUEST COLUMN

# Gearhart City Council has underestimated anger over rentals

By **TERRY GRAFF**  
*For The Daily Astorian*

**G**EARHART — I believe that everyone within the city of Gearhart, including the City Council, the city staff and residents, has been surprised by the increase in short-term rentals and the impact on the city.

I also believe the City Council has underestimated the anger and frustration experienced by many residents regarding this issue.

The change came lightning quick. It can be traced to the use of the Internet, professional marketing companies, investors entering the market and unfortunately a change in peoples' attitudes.

In 1994, the city adopted a comprehensive plan with a clear vision for the future to preserve the low density, semi-rural character. The plan states, "The city will recognize the importance of the city's neighborhoods and the need to protect them from negative impacts of the transient rental property and to discourage increased levels of traffic and similar disruptions."

Contrary to the policies in the comprehensive plan, the Planning Commission is considering a proposal to amend the city's zoning ordinance to allow short-term rentals in neighborhoods now zoned R-1 and R-2.

The intent of the zones is to protect residential neighborhoods from commercialization and direct businesses into areas zoned for commercial use. The comprehensive plan outlines seven specific uses for R-1 and R-2 areas and short-term rentals aren't among them.

So why have short-term rentals

been allowed to exist, and in some recent cases take over our residential neighborhoods? That has happened because for many years the city has turned a blind eye to their existence, though they are clearly for commercial gain and not expressly permitted as an outright use.

The proposal the Planning Commission is considering would fly in the face of the intent of the comprehensive plan and its policy to protect the neighborhoods. I am not aware of any analysis or discussion by the Planning Commission regarding the impact such an amendment would have on the property values in such neighborhoods.

Common sense tells me that it would be more difficult to sell your home if it is next to a short-term rental.

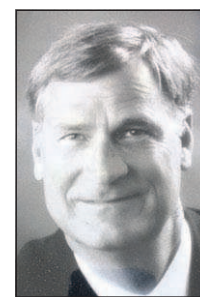
**Some may argue that the rental market never reaches capacity. Even at 90 percent, the numbers are still significant.**

Another option the city might consider is a proposal to amend the zoning ordinance to ban short-term rentals in neighborhoods zoned R-1 and R-2.

The Planning Commission is also considering restrictions on short-term rentals should the zoning be changed. These restrictions would include limits on occupancy, minimum stay requirements and a cap on the number of short-term rentals allowed.

The question becomes would the proposed restrictions be enough to stem the tide of renters flooding into Gearhart on a typical summer day? In order to answer that question, one only need look at the number of short-term rentals currently operating in the city.

City staff has been tracking those numbers the best they can, and as of November of last year there appears



**Terry Graff**

to be 85. These are not properties owned just by residents of Gearhart. Seven appear to be owned by residents, but others are owned by people living in California, Minnesota, Arkansas, Hawaii and Georgia.

The city also tracks the number of people being advertised to occupy each of those 85 short-term rentals. Based upon those numbers, on any given night, there could be 751 additional people staying in the rentals.

Consider the traffic. The city's septic system could be a whole other problem.

Some may argue that the rental market never reaches capacity. Even at 90 percent, the numbers are still significant.

Unless the Planning Commission and the City Council can pass very strong restrictions on short-term rentals, which would completely protect the residential character of its neighborhoods, I cannot support amending the zoning ordinance to include short-term rentals in areas now zoned R-1 and R-2.

I believe that we all understand that the issue is very divisive and that there will be very strong opposition to any controls whatsoever. That opposition will come from professional marketing companies, investors who bought property just to rent, homeowners who now see they can make large sums of money by renting property that they have never rented before, and from people who think that since they own a property they can do anything they want with it.

However, the Planning Commission must keep in mind that the primary obligation is to put controls in place that carry out the intent of the Gearhart comprehensive plan.

The Planning Commission is holding a public hearing regarding these matters at 6:00 pm on April 14. I welcome, and strongly encourage, anyone with an opinion, one way or the other, to attend.

*Terry Graff serves on the Gearhart Planning Commission.*

## College admissions shocker!

By **FRANK BRUNI**  
*New York Times News Service*

**P**ALO ALTO, Calif. — Cementing its standing as the most selective institution of higher education in the country, Stanford University announced this week that it had once again received a record-setting number of applications and that its acceptance rate — which had dropped to a previously uncharted low of 5 percent last year — plummeted all the way to its inevitable conclusion of 0 percent.

With no one admitted to the class of 2020, Stanford is assured that no other school can match its desirability in the near future.

"We had exceptional applicants, yes, but not a single student we couldn't live without," said a Stanford administrator who requested anonymity. "In the stack of applications that I reviewed, I didn't see any gold medalists from the last Olympics — Summer or Winter Games — and while there was a 17-year-old who'd performed surgery, it wasn't open-heart or a transplant or anything like that. She'll thrive at Yale."

News of Stanford's unprecedented selectiveness sent shock waves through the Ivy League, along with Amherst, Northwestern and at least a dozen other elite schools where, as a consequence, there could be substantial turnover among underperforming deans of admission.

Administrators at several of these institutions, mortified by acceptance rates still north of 6 percent, chided themselves for insufficient international outreach. Carnegie Mellon

vowed that over the next five years, it would quadruple the number of applicants from Greenland. The University of Chicago announced plans to host a college fair in Ulan Bator.

Officials at the University of Pennsylvania, meanwhile, realized that sweatshirts, T-shirts and glossy print and web catalogs weren't doing nearly enough to advertise its charms, and that the university wasn't fully leveraging the mystique of its world-renowned business school. So early next fall, every high school senior in America who scored in the top 4 percent nationally on the SAT will receive, in the mail, a complimentary spray bottle of Wharton: The Fragrance, which has a top note of sandalwood and a bottom note of crisp, freshly minted \$100 bills.

Seniors who scored in the top 2 percent will get the scented shower gel and reed diffuser set as well.

**With no one admitted to the class of 2020, Stanford is assured that no other school can match its desirability in the near future.**

On campuses from coast to coast, there was soul searching about ways in which colleges might be unintentionally deterring prospective applicants.

Were the applications themselves too laborious? Brown may give next year's aspirants the option of submitting, in lieu of several essays, one haiku and one original recipe using organic kale.

"Compositions of 750 or even 500 words give some students syllable fatigue," said a school official, "while others exhibit their greatest creativity around roughage. We want to meet them on their turf, especially if it's leafy and a rich source of vitamin B6."

Current high school seniors who had set their sights on Stanford responded to its announcement with astonishment and fury.



**Frank Bruni**

"This is the worst thing that has happened to anyone, ever," said Alissa Parker, 18, a senior at Sidwell Friends in Washington, D.C. She added that whether she accepts an offer of admission from MIT or one from Duke, she'll defer enrollment and take a gap year to regain her confidence.

Taylor Abramovich, a 15-year-old senior at the Horace Mann School in New York City, blamed his parents for his dashed Stanford dream. When he was a toddler, they hired the lawyer David Boies and successfully sued Horace Mann to let Taylor begin kindergarten far ahead of schedule.

"If I'd been held back a year, I would have been applying to the Stanford class of 2021, when the school might start accepting students again," Taylor fumed. He said that his one consolation for not getting in was knowing that none of his peers did, either.

At first blush, Stanford's decision would seem to jeopardize its fundraising. The thousands of rejected applicants included hundreds of children of alumni who'd donated lavishly over the years, their expectations obvious in the fact that they affixed their \$50,000 checks to photographs of Emma playing an obscure woodwind in an Umbrian chamber orchestra or Scott donning the traditional dress of an indigenous people for whom he tailored a special social-media network while on spring break.

But over recent years, Stanford administrators noticed that as the school rejected more and more comers, it received bigger and bigger donations, its endowment rising in tandem with its exclusivity, its luster a magnet for Silicon Valley lucre.

In fact just 12 hours after the university's rejection of all comers, an alumnus stepped forward with a financial gift prodigious enough for Stanford to begin construction on its long-planned Center for Social Justice, a first-ever collaboration of Renzo Piano and Santiago Calatrava, who also designed the pedestrian bridge that will connect it to the student napping meadows.