



**Astoria High graduate Conor Harber got his first start of the season Thursday, and gave up just one hit in 2.2 innings pitched.**

## Harber makes first start for Wisconsin

*The Daily Astorian*

GRAND CHUTE, Wis. — Three pitchers — including Astoria's Conor Harber — combined on a two-hit shutout to lead the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers to a 1-0 win over the Great Lakes Loons Thursday afternoon.

The victory at Fox Cities Stadium was the fifth straight win for the Rattlers, the Midwest League affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers.

Wisconsin's David Denson drove in the only run of the game with an RBI single in the eighth inning.

After making six relief appearances this year, it was the first start of the season for Harber, who responded by striking out five batters in two and two-thirds innings.

The only hit allowed by Harber was a bunt single in the top of the third to Gage Green.

Alex Farina took over with two outs in the third and retired all four batters he faced. Jake Drossner pitched the final five innings and got the decision for Wisconsin.

Harber faced 11 batters and threw 53 pitches (36 for strikes), walking two.

"I thought it went really well," Harber told the Rattlers' radio network after the game. "Right out of the gate, the defense made a really good play and gave me the confidence to keep throwing strikes."

For the season, Harber has allowed 11 hits in 12.0 innings pitched, with 18 strikeouts, six walks and a 4.50 ERA.

### SCOREBOARD

#### PREP SCHEDULE

##### TODAY

**Baseball** — Astoria at Banks, 5 p.m.; Seaside at Scappoose, 5 p.m.; Knappa at Nestucca (2), 3 p.m.

**Softball** — Tillamook at Astoria (2), 3:30 p.m.; Banks at Seaside (2), 3:30 p.m.; Warrenton at Ilwaco, 4 p.m.; Knappa at Nestucca (2), 3 p.m.

##### SATURDAY

**Track** — Dick Baker Invitational, Gladstone, 10 a.m.

## Lady Fishermen sweep Valiants in doubleheader

*The Daily Astorian*

BEAVERTON — The Astoria softball team bounced back from Tuesday's tough loss to Banks with a 3-1, 15-1 doubleheader sweep over Valley Cath-

olic Thursday in Beaverton.

The No. 10-ranked Lady Fish tuned up for today's doubleheader vs. Tillamook by shutting down the Valiants' offense.

Libby DiBartolomeo got the

win in Game 1, allowing just four hits with five strikeouts and no walks.

Rylee DeMander had two of Astoria's four hits, while Mykka Abrahams added a double for the Fishermen, who

scored a run in the first and two in the fifth.

DeMander pitched all five innings of Game 2, in which Astoria scored six runs in the first inning.

The Fishermen had four play-

ers (DeMander, Abrahams, Hannah Mather and McKailyn Rogers) with two hits apiece, while DeMander gave up just two hits with 10 strikeouts and two walks.

Abrahams and Abi Danen each had a double in Game 2.

Astoria improves to 4-3 in league (10-6 overall), and can take over second place in the Cowapa League with a sweep over Tillamook today. The last-place Valiants fall to 0-7 in league.

## VA study of service dogs for vets with PTSD faces questions

Some worry animals become substitutes for hard work

By ALLEN G. BREED  
*Associated Press*

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. — Army veteran Joe Aguirre opens a restaurant door, then steps aside to let his golden retriever take point. "Clear," Aguirre commands, and 3-year-old Munger pivots right, left, then right again, sweeping the room for potential threats.

"He's basically looking for ... anything that would be out of the ordinary. A bag. A particular weapon. People acting erratic," says Aguirre, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder after three tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. At the cash register, Aguirre says "Block," and the dog places himself perpendicular to his master, creating a buffer to anyone who might approach.

Before Munger, a simple outing like this would have been terrifying, if not impossible. "He's put faith back into my way of looking at society," Aguirre says.

But do the comfort and security this lovable dog provides come at the expense of true healing from PTSD? Is Munger merely preventing Aguirre from confronting his demons?

Since 2002, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has

paid veterinary bills to veterans with guide or service dogs for physical disabilities. Now, the agency is in the midst of a \$12 million study to gauge the efficacy and costs of using dogs to help those who suffer from post-traumatic stress.

Four years in, that research has been plagued by problems. Only about 50 dogs have been placed with veterans, and critics question whether the protocol itself is flawed — with the dogs being trained to do things that could reinforce fears. Others worry the animals could become a substitute for the hard work that comes with therapy.

"You will have the veterans go to more places with the dogs and do more things than they would otherwise do. But they are reliant on the dog, not on their knowledge of ... whether really they are afraid of a ghost," said Dr. Edna Foa, director of the Center for Treatment and Study of Anxiety at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine.

### Only 'evidence-based' therapies

More than 350,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have sought help from the VA for PTSD. Yet the agency is authorized to pay only for "evidence-based" therapies such as cognitive processing and prolonged exposure, which involve having veterans confront and analyze traumatic events.

In 2010, Congress permitted the VA to study alternative treatments for PTSD, including



AP Photo/Allen G. Breed

**Army veteran Joe Aguirre drapes a tattooed arm across the back of his service dog, Munger, in Fayetteville, N.C. The Department of Veterans Affairs is in the middle of a multiyear study to determine whether it should pay for such psychiatric service dogs.**

the therapeutic use of animals. The study began in late 2011 in Tampa, Florida, with three nonprofits contracted to provide up to 200 service dogs for veterans, who would be compared against a control group that did not receive dogs.

The effort soon ran into trouble. The VA cut off two of the three dog vendors following biting incidents involving participants' children. The final contract was terminated in August 2012 amid allegations of lax

veterinary care and placement of dogs "with known aggressive behavior," according to VA records. By then, only 17 dogs had been placed.

During the next year and a half, the study protocol was revamped to exclude veterans with children under age 10. It also dropped the no-dog control in favor of a group that would receive less-specialized "emotional support dogs" whose "sole function is to provide comfort."

### Trained for cues

Olmert is chief research adviser for Warrior Canine Connection, a Maryland-based nonprofit that uses veterans to train service dogs for their fellows. The group's leaders say dogs should be trained to pick up on cues from PTSD sufferers and then provide the appropriate support, such as learning to wake someone up during a nightmare or detecting when a veteran is anxious, and interacting in a way that helps calm him.

The VA's training protocol "reinforces the cognitive distortions that accompany PTSD," said Robert Koffman, a retired Navy psychiatrist and chief medical officer for Warrior Canine Connection.

Rick Yount, executive director of the nonprofit, questioned whether the study had perhaps even been set up to fail so that the VA wouldn't have to pick up the tab for veterinary bills for psychiatric service dogs. Already the VA is on the hook for upward of \$1.4 million a year to cover bills for service dogs for physical disabilities.

Michael Fallon, the VA's chief veterinary medical officer, said the insinuation that money is the researchers' chief concern is "ludicrous." As for the training guidelines, he said the list of commands was developed during more than a year of consultation with mental-health experts, service dog providers and veterans. They help get veterans "out into the community and integrated more into the public life," he said.

**Astoria Band Boosters**

### CAN & BOTTLE DRIVE

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**AT ASTORIA HIGH SCHOOL**

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Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
National Day of Prayer  
At Seaside Doogers  
505 Broadway

### WAKE UP AMERICA

~ Isaiah 58:1A

Breakfast Buffet from 7:30 to 8 am  
(Please pay upon arrival)

Prayer and Song Program from 8 to 9 am

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**DAVID BARSAMIAN**  
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