

Sisters: ‘They bonded immediately’

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professions, including commercial pilot and CEO of a machine shop — was raised by her grandparents, and Musante by an aunt. Two boys were placed in foster homes. A third brother died in infancy.

“Mother had a way of getting rid of the kids,” said Johnston, an insurance broker and former paralegal.

When Johnston was adopted, her new parents changed her birth name to prevent her biological family from finding her.

Family accounts paint Darling as an abusive and unstable mother. Kibby declined to talk about her.

An article in The Anniston Star in Alabama from April 1948 describes Darling dropping off the boys — then 10 and 8 — at a San Francisco bus station with a sack of clothes and a quarter and telling them to find the adoption agency.

After the brothers died later in life, Johnston thought she’d seen the last of her siblings. But rumors of two older sisters remained with her until she dug



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Ship tenders bring passengers, Patricia Kibby among them, to the shore.

through court records several years ago and confirmed their existence.

“That’s how I found out,” she said. “Then I didn’t know what to do about it.”

Johnston put it out of her mind — until Musante’s resourceful daughter-in-law brought them all together.

“This is something that should have happened a long time ago, for her to get acquainted with her sisters,” Bill Johnston said. “They bonded immediately.”

Together at last

Sitting side by side on a bench inside the Columbia

River Maritime Museum, the sisters — who didn’t even know each other until two months ago — reflected on their day, one of the most important in their long, eventful lives.

How did it go?

“Amazing,” Kibby said.

“Yes — I finally have a big sister I can pick on,” Johnston added, putting her arm around Kibby. “And I do, too — it’s all I did, all day.”

The Johnstons had taken Kibby out for breakfast at Pig ‘N Pancake in Astoria. Down in Cannon Beach, they took pictures in front of Haystack Rock — the first time Kibby had seen

the iconic sea stack in real life.

At the Seaside Carousel Mall, they bought each other gifts: Kibby got Johnston a sign that reads, “I smile because you’re my sister. I laugh because there’s nothing you can do about it.” And Johnston found Kibby a wooden carving of two sisters hugging with the inscription, “Sisters are forever.”

“We tried not to tell everybody that we were sisters,” Johnston said. “Every store we went in ...”

“... We told them, over and over,” said Kibby, who lives in Pomona and Colfax, California.

The Norwegian Jewel set sail at 5 p.m., but the women said they would meet up again in July in Idaho, where Musante lives, for a family reunion. Some of their own children may be present, giving the family’s younger generations a chance to know each other in a way their parents couldn’t until fairly late in life.

“The whole family is very, very excited,” Johnston said. “You never know when you’re going to find out something more about your family.”



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Marti Johnston and Patricia Kibby stand for a portrait near the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Salmon: ‘These efforts have already cost billions of dollars’

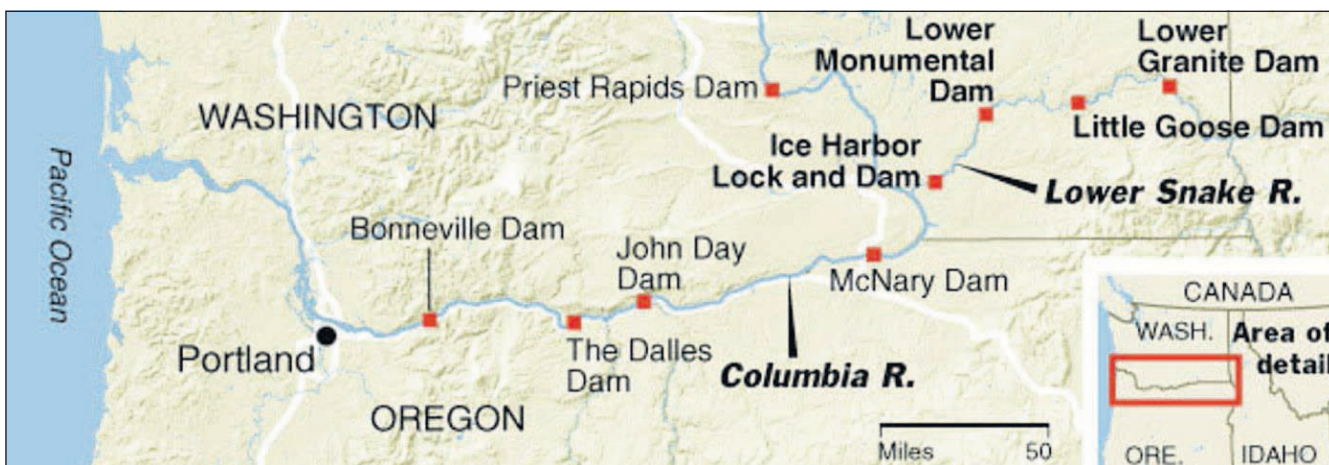
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It was the fifth time since 2001 that the court has invalidated the government’s plans, and rulings in the case show increasing impatience with federal agencies, including NOAA Fisheries, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. In his 149-page opinion, Simon found that for the past 20 years, the agencies have focused on trying to revive the basin’s 13 endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead runs by restoring habitat without compromising the generation of electricity.

“These efforts have already cost billions of dollars, yet they are failing,” he wrote.

Meanwhile, he said, federal agencies have “done their utmost” to avoid even considering breaching the Snake River dams — despite strong suggestions to do so by Judge James Redden, who oversaw the case from 2001 to 2011.

Among those who sued the government are the Nez Perce Tribe and the state of Oregon; conservation groups including the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, American Rivers and Columbia Riverkeeper; and fishing organizations including the Pacific



Dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers.

Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations.

The judge ordered the government to come up with a new plan by March 2018, but he said the invalid 2014 plan could nevertheless remain in effect until then because it does provide some level of protection for the salmon. He said he would not dictate what options the government must consider in the new plan, but he noted that a proper analysis under federal law “may well require consideration of the reasonable alternative of breaching, bypassing, or removing one or more of the four Lower Snake River Dams.”

Many biologists say breaching the dams is a crucial step for bringing back populations of salmon and steelhead that were decimated when the dams blocked upriver passage to their breeding grounds. Allowing the water to flow freely would also reduce its temperature, especially important in the face of global warming.

Last summer, hundreds of thousands of adult salmon died because of warm temperatures in the reservoirs behind the Columbia and Snake River dams, said Todd True, a lawyer with the environmental law firm Earthjustice who represents some of the plaintiffs.

“We need to seriously consider a plan that retires and removes the four lower Snake River dams,” he said in a written statement. “Only action on this scale has the potential to allow wild salmon to survive and recover in light of the vivid threat they face from a warming climate.”

Oregon officials have suggested another approach: spilling more water over the dams to improve salmon survival rates.

The federal agencies were disappointed in the ruling, NOAA spokesman Michael Milstein said in an emailed statement.

“The decision will require time and effort to analyze and fully understand,” the statement said. “We sincerely appreciate the region’s unprecedented collaboration and commitment on behalf of salmon, and the important progress that it has produced. We’ll continue our efforts with our partners to protect salmon and steelhead in the Basin and work toward their recovery.”

The Bonneville Power Administration, which operates the dams and has touted the habitat restoration efforts, declined to comment Wednesday except to say it was reviewing the decision.

Northwest RiverPartners, an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and businesses, intervened in the lawsuit on the side of the government. In a written statement, spokesman Terry Flores said the government’s plan was “the most science-based, comprehensive and expensive effort to restore an endangered species in the nation.”

“The decision potentially unwinds years of collaboration between federal agencies, Northwest states and tribes, and other stakeholders,” Flores said. “The ruling does not provide a path forward for the region, other than re-doing the plan’s analysis and conducting an evaluation of alternatives, including dam removal, under the National Environmental Policy Act.”

In addition to suggesting the agencies consider breaching the dams, the judge found several aspects of the government’s plan inadequate. It failed to properly consider the potentially catastrophic impact of climate change on the fish and was based on a dubious legal framework that allowed the agencies to conclude the species were “trending toward recovery” even with very little actual improvement in salmon numbers, he said.

Awards: More than 60 employees honored

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Superintendent Craig Hoppes started the awards with a moment of silence among the teachers and staff packing the high school’s commons for Martha Moore, a former language arts teacher who had been battling illness and died Tuesday.

“Over 85 people have worked for the district for 10 or more years, and that says a lot about our commitment to our kids and our commitment to our community,” said Hoppes, who has been with the district 19 years.

The award ceremony honored about 60 employees who have been with the district between 10 and 19 years, and about 20 more with 20 to 29 years of service.

Hollaway joined five others with more than 30 years experience, including second-grade teacher Deb Nelson, fourth-grade teacher Diana Lilley, special education teacher Dianna Young and former teacher and technology director Scott Holmstedt.

Excellence awards

The Collaboration Recognition Award, which honors a group of teachers working together to enhance student learning, went to the staff, visiting teachers and volunteers of the Gray Alternative High School. The program helps students in Clatsop County who, for whatever reason, do not fit into a traditional high school, to earn their diploma from Astoria or pass a Gen-



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Annette Macareno, second from right, was awarded the Classified/Support Staff of the Year Award for translating and interpreting with Spanish-speaking families for the Astoria School District. John Jacob Astor Elementary School Principal Kate Gohr, left, gave Macareno the award, flanked by Astoria School Board members Shawn Helligso, second from left, Jenna Rickenbach, center and Jeanette Sampson.

eral Educational Development tests.

“I’ve watched this program grow probably the last eight or nine years to where we’ve graduated one or two kids, to last year, where we graduated 12 kids,” Hoppes said. And these are 12 kids who graduated, that if were not in this program, would not have graduated from any high school.”

Annette Macareno, a bilingual teaching assistant, took home the Classified/Support Staff Member of the Year Award. Macareno often translates for Spanish-speaking families, and also works

at Astoria’s Migrant Summer School.

“She is what we call a connector, Hispanic families to our school, and also districtwide” said Principal Kate Gohr of John Jacob Astor Elementary School. “She translates every document we send out at Astor School.”

Gohr said Macareno helps the school district figure out transportation for Hispanic families, their contact information and where parents work, while also providing teachers language support in the classroom.

The Certified Staff Member of the Year Award went to

Angela Calvin-Pederson, who teaches general music at Lewis and Clark, and orchestra at Astoria Middle School and the high school.

“Mr. Hoppes emailed a month ago and asked us to play tonight,” said Calvin-Pederson, who conducted the high school’s orchestra during the awards. “I go to the high school class and I was joking with them like ‘Oh, they’re going to acknowledge me’ ... But these kids, it’s pretty special, because I have them third to 12th grade, and I watch them grow up. I chaperone them at the dances. It’s crazy, but I do love them to death.”



Court: ‘Warrenton is where we started. And we are coming home’

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Judge A. Wallace Tashima found that the fishermen — including Dennis Rankin of Astoria — showed a sufficient likelihood of success in their legal challenge and demonstrated the potential for irreparable harm from the sale.

The Oregon Attorney General’s Office has called the potential merger of Pacific Seafood and Ocean Gold “presumptively unlawful given the degree of market concentration.”

“The decision this week was about where the dispute would be heard,” said Daniel Occhipinti, Pacific Seafood’s general counsel and director of government affairs. “We’re disappointed with the ruling but we continue to maintain that the plaintiffs’ claims are meritless, and we will prove that in whatever forum we have to.”

Michael Haglund, a Portland attorney for the fishermen, said the fishermen hope Ocean Gold entertains

offers from other possible buyers.

In March, Pacific Seafood announced plans to rebuild a fish processing plant that burned down in Warrenton in 2013. State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, helped secure \$3 million in state funds to help with the project.

But Haglund continues to question whether Pacific Seafood would rebuild in Warrenton if the company is able to acquire Ocean Gold.

“Fishermen in Warrenton and Astoria have a significant stake in this battle,” Haglund said. “If Pacific Seafood

were successful in acquiring Ocean Gold, industry sources tell us that the Warrenton plant will never be rebuilt and would be little more than a landing station.”

Occhipinti said the company has always intended to rebuild the plant. “Warrenton is where we started. That was our first processing plant,” he said. “And we are coming home.”



Daniel Occhipinti