

# Armory: 'It's like my second home'

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out the Armory for space, and organizing the Friends' resume-writing workshops, health clinics and other charity endeavors.

Since volunteers cleared the former storage space out two years ago and opened the doors, the Armory has become a hub for community groups, from the skate park in the basement and the LGBT community's Q Center to Corri Buck's Filling Empty Bellies each afternoon in the lobby. Last week alone, the building hosted a skate night, the city's inaugural Gay Pride Gala, Shanghaied Roller Dolls derby practices, youth skating programs, college gym classes and several lunches for homeless and low-income residents.

Koustik has been supported by a small army of volunteers. Jawnna Bowerman, named volunteer of the year, said she first became interested in the Armory, where she had last skated the night she turned 21, after learning her granddaughter could skate for free if she helped out. "Now it's like my second home," she said.

Charitable organizations have taken notice of the Armory's work. United Way of Clatsop County recently added the Armory to its annual fundraising campaign. The Oregon Community Foundation has also donated \$20,000 to help improve the Armory's lobby and kitchen.

## Filling Empty Bellies

In the kitchen Thursday, Mike Doran helped other volunteers serve chili dogs, potato salad, chips and cupcakes to the homeless and low-income residents who filtered into the lobby. After the others were served, he loaded up a couple plates and sat down for lunch.

Doran said he has used the program, which provides all comers with lunch six days a week and brunch on Sundays, to supplement the meager food stamps and disability benefits he receives. He sees helping Buck, temporarily sidelined after surgery, as a way to give back. He and others used to get their lunches from Buck in parks and parking lots around Astoria. When it rained, diners would take their lunch and find a place to hide, or just sit and eat in the wet-



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Volunteer server Eva Telford shares a laugh with others while serving lunch in the Astoria Armory June 9. The armory provides a free lunch daily to those in need.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Armory Events Coordinator Robyn Koustik chats with those receiving free lunch at the Astoria Armory on June 9. Koustik helps facilitate, participate and organize the community events at the Armory. More photos online at [DailyAstorian.com](http://DailyAstorian.com)

ness. Then in February, the Armory invited Buck's program indoors.

"I think it's beautiful," said Doran, who also works security during Shanghaied Roller Doll matches. "If it wasn't for the program, we'd still be out in the rain."

Stein said the Armory's board wanted the building to be a community center for all, including those most in need. "It's not all about ... the mayor's ball, assistance league and those things. We also want to help folks who don't have anything," he said.

## Bringing back the Armory

In its heyday, the Armory would take in more than 3,000 people, attracting such

acts as Deep Purple, Buffalo Springfield and Jack Benny. But with all of its infrastructural issues, the reopened Armory has been limited to several hundred, at most.

Jones said the Friends have held off starting any major work while the group secures a mortgage and improvement loan, part of it guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Helping secure the loan is the Armory's lender, Craft3, which acquired the Armory two years ago from the Columbia River Maritime Museum and leased the building to the Friends for \$1 a year.

"We believe we're within about a month of getting the loan signed," Jones said. "Once we have the improvement loan, we have sub-

city and homeowners association take corrective measures by November to completely restore the dune by returning sand, restoring its topography and replanting European beach grass.

If the corrective actions are not completed by that time, the city and Breakers Point could be fined civil penalties up to \$10,000 per day.

## 'A simple mistake'

The city responded to the notice by submitting a remediation plan that the state approved, City Manager Brant Kucera said.

Kucera said the removal of sand from a state recreation area was "a simple mistake."

"We felt like it was an emergency. We were compelled to move sand to stop erosion."

"The issue boils down to where the sand was taken from," Kucera said. "Sand was moved from an area that would have needed approval from Oregon Parks and Recreation. We did not intend to take sand from that far into the dune."

In response to the notice, Breakers Point Homeowners Association requested a hearing and stated that the violation did not apply to them because the city "did the work to improve public and emergency access to the beach."

"Breakers Point expects to work with the city and the state to resolve this matter," Dean Alterman, the homeowner association's attorney,

said in an email. "The association has requested a hearing before Oregon Parks and Recreation Department as a precaution, in case we can't solve it amicably."

The letter requesting a hearing asked the state to consider that Breakers Point Homeowners Association "did not remove sand from the ocean shore or alter any dunes west of the statutory vegetation line; the City of Cannon Beach performed the work on its own initiative."

The alliance would like all involved parties to bear responsibility, La Follette said.

"The financial planning and restoration responsibilities should be placed on both parties who participated in illegally grading the public sands," she said.

# Adams: Former treasurer is due back in court in August for early resolution conference

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Police continue to investigate, and believe she may have stolen more funds.

"This has been an ongoing investigation for a couple of years now," Workman said. "There is more to come on this."

Members of the nonprofit went through bank statements after Adams took over as treasurer and discovered funds were not adding up, according to Workman. Members believe

she misappropriated the funds. The Deep Sea Fishermen's Benefit Fund maintains an emergency fund to help fishermen and their families. The nonprofit hosts crab feeds in Warrenton to raise money.

Adams has a criminal history in Clatsop County. She was convicted in 2010 of first-degree theft and multiple computer crimes.

Adams is due back in court in August for an early resolution conference.

The alleged theft from the

Fishermen's Benefit Fund is the second recent incident involving a Warrenton group. Earlier this year, Ronald Kay Williams, the former director of the Commercial Fishermen's Festival, was sentenced to nearly three years in prison.

Williams, 52, stole money out of festival bank accounts, took signs, autographed memorabilia and kept a dunk tank. The crimes occurred between September 2011 and March 2012.

# Kujala: Mayor had recused himself before

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Kujala recused himself last year and this year from commission debates and votes related to the dam. The mayor explained in a May email that he did so "in the abundance of caution that this project may have an economic impact on my home and business."

Kujala also acknowledged in May that the Nygaard family came to him with questions about the dam. The mayor said he called City Attorney Hal Snow because they were legal questions involving the city.

On Wednesday, Kujala declined to comment on why he chose to participate in the executive session on the dam Tuesday night or explain what additional role, if any, he has played behind-the-scenes to influence the city.

"As you know, I'm not allowed to comment on anything to do with executive session," Kujala said.

The executive session was not posted on the City Commission's agenda prior to Tuesday's meeting. Snow said the discussion was called to address potential legal and property matters.

Executive sessions are closed to the public but open to news reporters, who are expected not to disclose the details of the discussions.

## Law promotes transparency

State ethics law instructs elected officials to publicly announce the nature of potential conflicts of interest before taking any action. For actual conflicts, where the elected official or a relative has a financial interest, the elected official is expected to give public notice and refrain from participating in the debate or — under most

circumstances — voting on the issue.

Kujala recused himself when the City Commission considered an agreement with the Skipanon Water Control District and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce to remove the dam and install a single-lane bridge to preserve the city's emergency access. A gravel road over the dam now links Eighth Street to private property owned by Kujala's family and others.

The water district, which owns the dam, considers the aging structure a hazard and of no use for flood control. CREST has sought to use federal Bonneville Power Administration money to help the water district remove the dam and improve fish passage and water quality on the Skipanon River.

## Commission backs out

The City Commission had twice supported a deal with the water district and CREST. But in May, after appeals led by the Kujala family and the Nygaard family, commissioners voted 2-2 against renewing the agreement.

The water district and CREST have decided to move forward with removing the dam without installing the single-lane bridge the city wanted for emergency access. The move could provoke a legal clash with the city and private property owners.

Tessa Scheller, the chairwoman of the water district's board, said she has been researching the cost of barricades to close off the gravel road over the dam.

"It's completely unsafe," she said. "It exposes us. And now that we've had the city decline, we really have to take care of business."



Mark Kujala

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