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FREE SWIM

PENINSULA WOMAN'S GENEROSITY PROVIDES THE GIFT OF SWIMMING

Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

Naselle School fourth-graders play in the deep end during free time at a recent swim lesson at the Astoria Aquatic Center.

By DAMIAN MULINIX
For EO Media Group

For the last three years, the third- and fourth-grade students at Naselle School in Washington have been taking swimming lessons at the Astoria Aquatic Center. New this year, the school is not only seeing these young students come out of the six-week program as better swimmers, but thanks to an arrangement between the aquatic center and the Oller Fund, the school is also seeing a significant savings.

"Most of our kids were able to do it for free," said Naselle School Principal Quinn Donlon. "Two-third of our kids are from Pacific County. (The Oller Fund) made a big difference and really helped out."

In fact, last year the school spent $2,025 on swim lessons. This year the bill came in at just $600 thanks to the Oller Fund, which now has a standing arrangement with the Astoria Aquatic Center that allows all residents of south Pacific County to swim for free. About one-third of the third- and fourth-graders at Naselle are from Wahkiakum County, which is not covered by the deal.

According to Jennifer Benoit, the communications coordinator for Astoria Parks and Recreation, Naselle is the only school so far from south Pacific County to take advantage of the free lessons.

"This is the only one," she said. "We love the idea of kids coming and learning how to swim. It's important to the community. If it were something other schools could fit in, I'm sure we'd be on board with that. It's been fun to have them coming. It brings a lot of life to Tuesdays and Thursdays."

How it came to be

Since Aug. 1, residents of south Pacific County have been able to swim and take lessons at the Astoria Aquatic Center for free thanks to the Oller Fund, named for Verna

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Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

Naselle School fourth-graders swim at the Astoria Aquatic Center recently. The lessons are free for the students from south Pacific County — around two-thirds of the students — thanks to the Oller Fund, which is from a $4.5 million bequest.

Seaside mayoral suitors step up

Barber, Johnson show interest in top spot

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — City councilors met Monday afternoon to consider a replacement for former Mayor Don Larson. Larson stepped down from his post in November due to ill health after serving as mayor since 2002.

By the session's conclusion, two contenders emerged for the position, councilors Don Johnson and Jay Barber. By the end of the night's regular City Council meeting, a third name, that of Councilor-elect Tom Horning, was added to the mix.

Councilors considered three options: select someone on the council to fill the mayor's two-year unexpired term; appoint a former elected official; or choose someone outside of the council from the Seaside electorate.

According to city code, the mayoral vacancy must be filled by a council majority vote.

The appointee would serve immediately and continue until the January following the next general city election in 2018.

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Plan leaves conflicts of interest out of audit

ODOT review does not address the problem

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A $1 million management audit of the Oregon Department of Transportation may not address how well the agency avoids conflicts of interest in awarding project contracts.

Gov. Kate Brown ordered the audit at the request of state legislators who want to ensure ODOT is operating effectively before they approve costly transportation funding next year.

That legislation — one of Brown's priorities as governor — could hike gas taxes and fees on drivers and funnel hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding to the agency. Among lawmakers' concerns were instances when the department hired or kept contractors who appeared to have conflicts of interest.

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Weed is winning, but train could still go off the tracks

Government can still halt pot progress

By KRISTEN WYATT
Associated Press

DENVER — Weed is winning in the polls, with a solid majority of Americans saying marijuana should be legal. But does that mean the federal government will let dozens of state pot experiments play out? Not by a long shot.

The government still has many means to slow or stop the marijuana train. And President-elect Donald Trump's nomination of Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions to be the next attorney general has raised fears that the new administration could crack down on weed-tolerant states 20 years after California became the first to legalize medical marijuana.

"We need grown-ups in charge in Washington to say marijuana is not the kind of thing that ought to be legalized. It ought not to be minimized, that it's in fact a very real danger," Sessions said during an April Senate hearing.

The Controlled Substances Act bans pot even for medical purposes. A closer look at some of the government's options for enforcing it:

Take 'em to court

The government rarely invokes its authority to sue states, but it's the quickest path to compliance. The Justice

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AP Photo/Ryan Kang

Shane Cavanaugh, owner of Amazon Organics, a pot dispensary in Eugene arranges the cannabis display in his store. The government still has many means to slow or stop the marijuana train and President-elect Donald Trump's nomination of Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions to be the next attorney general has raised fears that the new administration could crack down on weed-tolerant states.

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