

St. Clare: Remains in jail on a hold from Snohomish County

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Inside the car were 42 cats, one of which had died two days earlier. Animal control, wearing breathing masks because of the overwhelming smell of ammonia, were able to remove the cats from the vehicle.

St. Clare is required not to own or possess animals as part of her probation. If she violates probation, the plea agreement stipulates she will serve 20 months in prison.

She originally was charged with 40 counts of animal neglect and one count of first-degree animal abuse. Since the arrest, some of the cats have died or have had to be euthanized, while others were born since then.

History of hoarding

St. Clare's history of keeping her cats from authorities dates back to a court case in Snohomish County.

She was convicted there last year of hoarding 111 cats in a recreational trailer. The cats were covered in lice and mites, dehydrated and malnourished, covered in urine and feces and had multiple viruses. All 111 cats were euthanized after her arrest in that case.

She then skipped a court hearing in April 2016 that determined how much she would pay the county back



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
ABOVE: One of the dozens of cats rescued from a local individual's vehicle gets some attention at the Clatsop County Animal Shelter. **LEFT:** Kathryn St. Clare, right, pleaded guilty Wednesday to four counts of second-degree animal neglect.

for its investigation. Instead, St. Clare headed south to Oregon, where she believed her cats were safer from Snohomish County authorities.

"Frankly, that probation failed," Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis said.

He said at the sentencing the probation was designed to be straightforward, seeking only a strong incentive for her to no longer own animals.

St. Clare revealed she had been trying to find a permanent home for the cats in Clatsop

County for roughly a year. She said she worked on a farm for a short period of time, as the cats had room to spread out, but left when she found out the farm owner was a methamphetamine addict.

"I knew they needed to be cleaned, and I knew they needed to be fed," she said. "I just failed in trying to get them out of the car."

Leukemia problem

Marquis presented evidence at St. Clare's arraignment in April that she knew

one of her cats suffered from leukemia, a potentially lethal virus that is easily transferable to other cats. She brought the cat to Columbia Veterinary Hospital, and later, Bayshore Animal Hospital, when she noticed the cat had an upper-respiratory issue.

She was told there that the cat had leukemia and was warned of its effects. St. Clare said, though, that since the fatality rate of the virus is not 100 percent, she didn't want to turn the animals over to be euthanized.

"In my mind, it was not a death sentence," St. Clare said. "To euthanize these guys just because they test positive for a virus, I believe, is wrong."

Marquis said the only reason he wasn't seeking prison time for St. Clare was that she agreed to surrender the cats from her possession before the deal was made. Out of the 27 total cats that are tapped as available for adoption from the Clatsop County Animal Shelter, 15 are eligible immediately. The shelter will hold an

adoption event noon to 4 p.m. Friday.

Many of the cats will not be as lucky, though.

"I am sure in some way Ms. St. Clare believes she's saving these animals," Marquis said. "The irony is that she was condemning them to a much earlier death."

St. Clare remains in the Clatsop County Jail on a hold from Snohomish County. If Snohomish County seeks extradition and further prosecution, St. Clare may face up to 30 days in jail.

Fisheries: Fishing is still lucrative

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industry provides to the community as a whole, and the well-paying jobs that still exist on boats and in fish processing plants. "It's organic, it's free-range ... it's diet-free, whatever," joked Scott McMullen, of the Oregon Fishermen's Cable Committee, about rockfish and how certain stocks like canary rockfish have recently been delisted.

Some troubles

But concerns crept in, too. For example, a species like canary rockfish has been off-limits and off the market for so long on the West Coast that fishermen are "fighting to get back into the shelf space," McMullen said. While they were absent, other markets and countries filled the void.

Managers at Da Yang Seafood and processing giant Pacific Coast Seafood talked about the difficulty of recruiting labor to the area. People don't seem to understand that processing jobs can be well-paid, they said. Pacific Coast Seafood has started to recruit farther afield and made do with fewer employees, while Da Yang has looked into automation. The lack of affordable, short-term rental housing options for seasonal workers complicates hiring, too, they say.

Still lucrative

Fishermen, meanwhile, say fishing is still lucrative. Many fishermen talked about buying or building houses and sending their kids to college on the money they earn fishing. But there is still a stereotype that fishermen are "poorly trained, poorly educated," said guest speaker Bill Antilla, a former commercial fisherman and instructor at Clatsop Com-



Da Yang Seafood Processing Plant Manager Chang Lee, right, holds up an example of the product during a tour of the facility.

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munity College's Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station.

In actuality, however, fishermen have to juggle a complex mix of regulations and they have to know how to manage a small business in the middle of uncertain ocean, river and market conditions each season.

Both the fishermen, represented by groups like the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission and the Oregon Salmon and Albacore Commissions, and the seafood processors are looking at high school job fairs, trying to change the idea, as Antilla put it, that "Fishing is something you do when you can't do anything else."

Boat building

Boat builders and fabricators talked about the need for greater infrastructure if businesses like theirs wanted to grow. The two companies the tour visited, WCT Marine & Construction Inc. and J&H Boatworks, are both based at the Port of Astoria's Tongue Point site.

But the Port faces challenges in developing the site due in large part to the costly

lease of the land. Astoria City Councilor Bruce Jones asked WCT yard superintendent Willie Toristoja what it would take to get more boat building at Tongue Point. A travel lift, deeper water and facilities out on the pier, Toristoja replied. All big, expensive projects, said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director.

In attendance

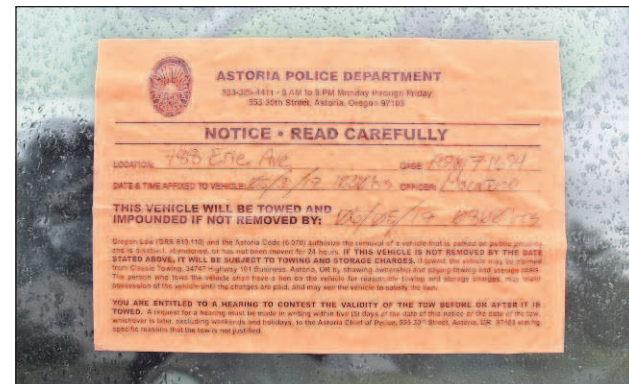
Representatives from local government, fishing groups and state agencies, as well as people from banks and investment groups, two Oregon fish and wildlife commissioners and U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici attended the tour. Bonamici said she was there to listen to the concerns of the community. After lunch at Englund Marine & Industrial Supply, the Oregon Democrat briefed attendees on several policy issues affecting fishing communities: bills on ocean acidification, tsunami warning and detection systems, research on harmful algal blooms, and climate change. She was critical of President Donald Trump's budget proposal.

"The president's budget

does not align with Oregon values," she said, noting how it would slash at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funding and infrastructure grants such as the TIGER grants the Port of Astoria contemplates using for future development at Tongue Point. The congresswoman also noted how the budget would completely eliminate Sea Grant.

Organizer Amanda Gladics, who works in extension fisheries management with Sea Grant, wanted people unfamiliar with local fishery efforts to walk away with more information, and to give people in the fishing industry a chance to tell their side of the story. She also hoped the tour would build connections and relationships, "so people have a face and a name to ask the questions they didn't think about today," she said.

Sea Grant has run similar tours in Newport — "Shop on the Dock" — intended to educate consumers about seafood and guide them along the city's commercial fishing docks, showing them where they can buy fresh seafood directly from fishermen.



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The Astoria Police Department places notices on vehicles that are about to be towed and impounded.

Trespass: Study will examine a possible county jail relocation

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Abandoned cars

Many callers to police dispatchers have also complained recently about abandoned cars. Most of these calls stem from residential neighborhoods, while some are a result of occupied recreational vehicles parked for an extended period of time, Halverson said. While the city code restricts parking in one spot on city streets for more than 24 hours, callers often will report vehicles abandoned for a couple of weeks.

Astoria Police are attempting to curb trespassing issues, along with aggressive panhandling incidents downtown, through a program called Property Watch.

Since the program was reinstated in March, 11 property owners have signed a one-year contract allowing police to supervise properties and remove people who engage in disorderly activity after business hours. Business owners are also encouraged to post signs warning against unruly behavior and that officers have the right to enforce trespass laws on that property.

"I've seen a decrease in unruly behavior since I posted that sign," said Samuel McDaniel, manager of Astoria Downtown Market. "My problems have been mitigated substantially."



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Clatsop County law enforcement officers have seen a rise in the number of vehicles reported by residents to have been abandoned.

Package: Snowstorms helped shape legislation

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The money for the plan would come from a combination of hikes in the gas tax and registration and license fees, tolls, new taxes on payroll, vehicle dealers and adult bicycle purchases.

Specific projects

The plan identifies a few specific projects to ease congestion, but other projects would be prioritized by the Oregon Transportation Commission. Specific projects would:

- Add lanes on Interstate 5 near Portland's Rose Quarter from Interstate 84 to Interstate 405.

- Add northbound and southbound lanes on Highway 217 through the Portland metro area.

- Widen Interstate 205 to six lanes from Oregon City to Stafford Road.

- Widen and seismically reinforce Interstate 205's Abernethy Bridge.

The plan raises an average of about \$800 million per year in additional transportation funding.

The money would come from increases in the gas tax and vehicle fees and a set of new taxes over the next 10 years, including:

- Gradual gas tax increase from 30 cents to 42 cents by 2025.

- Tiered increases in title and registration fees, depending on type of vehicle.

- A surcharge of \$100 for electric vehicles and \$15 for other vehicles.

- Statewide payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent to pay for mass transit.

- Tolls to be determined.

- Bicycle excise tax of 5 percent.

- Dealer privilege tax of 0.75 percent on new and used vehicle purchases.

The bill also includes several accountability measures, including:

- Giving authority to appoint the director of the Oregon Department of Transportation to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

- Requiring a website where taxpayers could follow the progress and budgets of projects in their area.

- Providing an independent staff for the Oregon Transportation Commission, which sets policy for ODOT.

The state's December and January snowstorms also shaped the package. One provision requires ODOT and cities with a population greater than 160,000 to salt roads when there is more than 2 inches of snow on the ground.

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