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OUR VIEW

Each week we recognize those people and organizations in the community deserving of public praise for the good things they do to make the North Coast a better place to live, and also those who should be called out for their actions.



SHOUTOUTS



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The professionals were not the only ones putting on a fireworks show on the Astoria Riverwalk on the Fourth of July.

• **Organizers** of this week's **July 4th celebrations** across the North Coast, which brought thousands to the area and was filled with food, festivities and fireworks and plenty of small-town Americana. The activities included fun-filled parades with spectators filling the routes in Warrenton, Seaside, Gearhart, Cannon Beach and Ocean Park across the river, and fireworks displays in Seaside, Astoria and Long Beach, Washington. A special mention goes to **Larry Kriegshauser**, a pyrotechnics specialist who has been the wizard behind the curtain of the Seaside fireworks shows for more than 17 years. Kriegshauser has been designing fireworks shows across the country every Fourth of July since 1970.

• **Clatsop Community College graduate Alex Lyon**, who was chosen as one of 115 Ford Family Foundation scholars from more than 5,800 applications in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The renewable scholarship covers 90 percent of each student's unmet financial need for each academic year. Lyon is part of the college's TRIO Student Support Services program, which helps first generation, low-income and disabled students. She intends to pursue a bachelor's degree in education at Western Oregon University.

• **Gearhart Golf Links**, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year with events planned throughout the summer. The 6,500-yard golf course is the oldest on the Pacific Coast and was established in 1892, predating the founding of the U.S. Golf Association in 1896. The course, which has been returned to its original links style this year, is managed by Jason Bangild, a PGA professional.

• **Miss Clatsop County Hannah Garhofer**, of Seaside, who competed in the Miss Oregon pageant last weekend at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center and advanced into the top 12. Garhofer earned a scholarship and also received an award for being the nicest contestant. She will attend the University of Oregon this fall. In the Outstanding Teen pageant, **Peyton Sims** and **Nicole Ramsdell** represented the region as **Miss Clatsop County** and **Miss North Coast**.

• Building owner and entrepreneur **Noel Weber**, who is restoring the former YMCA building in Astoria's downtown historic district. Weber recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office's "Diamonds in the Rough" program to help restore or replace several architectural elements on the 103-year-old building's facade. The grant will accelerate the restoration, and Weber says the building is a work in progress with more on the interior and exterior coming in the future.

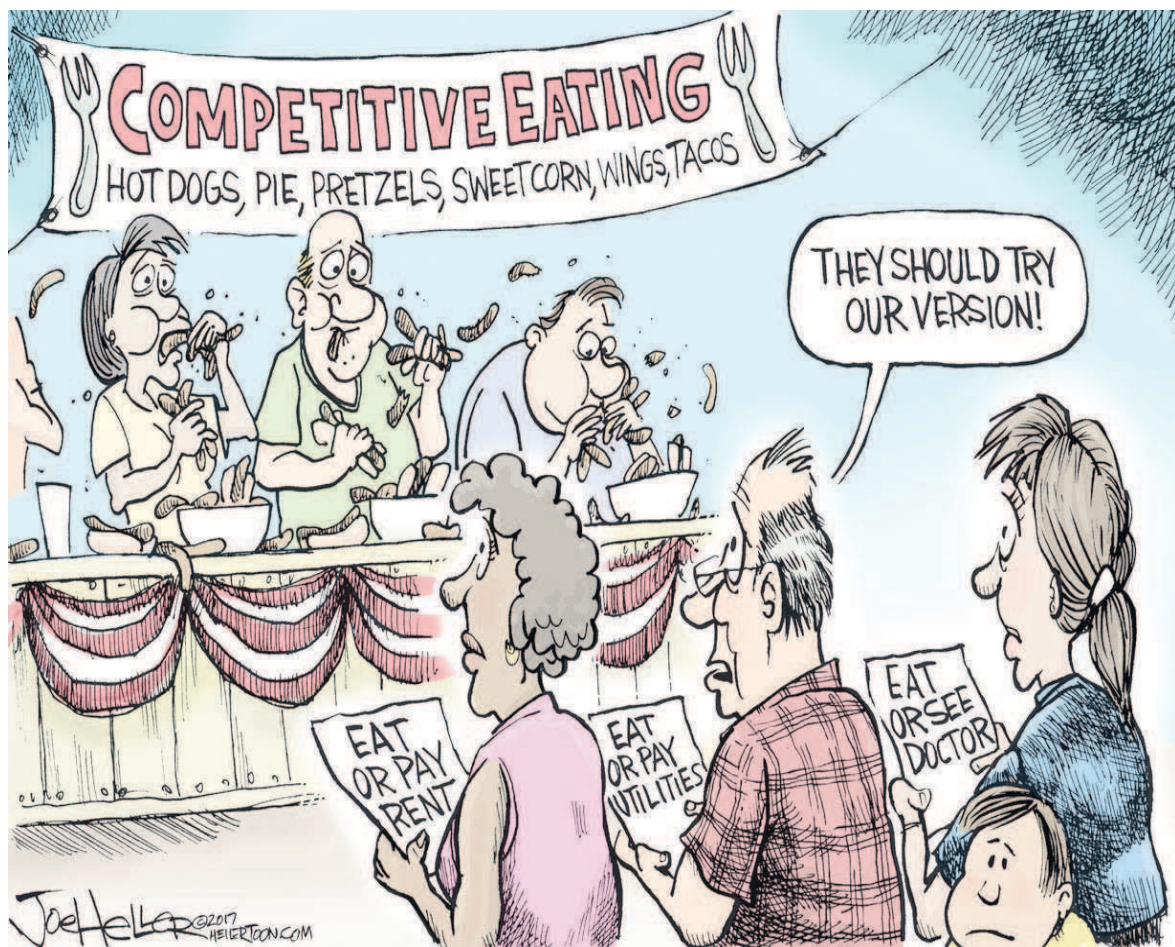


CALLOUTS

• **The Oregon Department of Revenue**, which last week was ordered to undergo a top-to-bottom review with a \$150,000 comprehensive financial audit and a \$350,000 management assessment. Previous financial audits have shown "significant" and "material weaknesses" in the tax-collecting agency's accounting system, and according to the Statesman-Journal newspaper in Salem, lawmakers upped scrutiny of the department after its leadership made budget presentations. "They came in and it was clear there were issues," said state Rep. David Gomberg, D-Central Coast. Throughout the next two years, the agency will be required to make frequent reports to lawmakers during the interim and regular sessions of the Legislature. The agency has previously defended itself by saying its accountants lacked training and experience. Gomberg told the newspaper that department Director Nia Ray has been "reoriented" by the scrutiny her agency faces. He said she now has a clear sense of what the Legislature is looking for.

Suggestions?

Do you have a Shoutout or Callout you think we should know about? Let us know at news@dailyastorian.com and we'll make sure to take a look.



In remote village, witnessing miracles

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Service

BUCHANAN, Liberia — Miracles are rare these days, but I've seen them.

In a village in rural Liberia, a long and muddy road from anywhere, I came across a grandma, a mom and a baby daughter all afflicted by clubfoot. This is a common birth defect in which one or both feet are grotesquely turned inward.

We don't see it in the U.S. or Europe because doctors correct it soon after birth, and clubfoot alumni include athletic superstars like Mia Hamm and Kristi Yamaguchi. My mother (a tireless walker with perfectly normal feet) was born with a clubfoot.

Yet here, as in most of the world, kids with clubfoot weren't treated and grew up as outcasts. About one child in 800 worldwide is born with clubfoot, and in poor countries they are left to hobble on the sides of their feet; unable to work, they may become beggars.

In this village, clubfoot used to be a life sentence: The grandma, Yahin-ye Korwee, never went to school, nor did her daughter, Hannah Cooper, 26. The grandfather abandoned the family when Hannah was born, ashamed that neighbors mocked her as a cripple.

Then Cooper had her own daughter 11 months ago, also with clubfoot (it's partly hereditary), and her boyfriend left her as well. "You've got a crippled child," she remembered him saying. "I don't want it."

Yet this baby had her feet fixed. This is possible with a simple nonsurgical treatment involving a series of plaster casts to guide the foot into the proper position.

This approach, called the Ponseti method, is routine in Western countries and is increasingly available in poor countries as well, through aid groups like MiracleFeet, based in North Carolina, and Cure, based in Pennsylvania.

I wish that skeptics of humanitarian aid could have seen the baby get care from MiracleFeet and emerge with feet as good as anyone else's. Now she'll be able to walk and run, go to school and hold a job, support herself and her country.

And the total cost? Less than \$500 for transforming a life.

I'm on my annual win-a-trip journey with a university student, Aneri Pattani (who has been busily blogging at nytimes.com/onthegeound — check out her posts!). I wanted us to report on clubfoot because it's an antidote to skepticism about humanitarian aid.

The dirty little secret of foreign aid is that it's hard. You can build a school, but it's hard to ensure that teachers will show up. You can build a well, but what happens when the hand pump breaks? You can provide safe birthing kits, but what if a nurse sells them on the black market?

I wish that skeptics of humanitarian aid could have seen the baby get care from MiracleFeet and emerge with feet as good as anyone else's. ... And the total cost? Less than \$500 for transforming a life.

Look, helping people is complicated. But I'm a strong advocate of more aid because sometimes aid is transformative. When properly done, clubfoot treatment is straightforward, succeeds 95 percent of the time and inexpensively changes a life like that of this 11-month-old girl.

"Now she'll go to school," said Chesca Colloredo-Mansfeld, executive director of MiracleFeet. "She's going to stand on her own two feet for the rest of her life."

Yet most children in poor countries still don't get clubfoot

repaired. The Global Clubfoot Initiative estimates that only 15 percent of children in low- and middle-income countries get good treatment, and it aims to raise that to 70 percent by 2030. Aid groups like MiracleFeet train local health care workers to treat clubfoot, so that over time each country's own health system can take over diagnosis and treatment. But for now, thousands of children slip through the cracks.

Cooper told us that there was another child in the village with clubfoot, and soon he was brought to us. His name was Henroy, and at age 9 he had never attended school because he has trouble even hobbling. MiracleFeet is now arranging to fix his feet, too.

In another town, Ganta, we saw the toll on families of clubfoot. A small boy, Aria, was being looked after by his grandmother, Nora Glay, because his mother fled rather than raise a child she expected to be permanently disabled. "She was embarrassed," Glay said of the mother, "and that's why she abandoned the child."

But Glay heard on the radio that clubfoot could be repaired. So she borrowed money from friends and took Aria on a weeklong odyssey to get to the Ganta hospital, where Aria's feet will be corrected over the coming months so that he will be able to walk and run.

A few feet away in the hospital waiting area, Saye Willie acknowledged that he was initially devastated when his son, Bigboy, was born with clubfoot. "I thought it was witchcraft," the father said. "I accused my wife of taking a bath at night, and I thought somebody put drugs in the water."

Bigboy, 7, seems a bit over- come at the prospect that his feet will soon be normal, allowing him to walk, run, play soccer. "I want to go to school," he told me. "I want my feet to be good so I can run, too."

My friend Michael Elliott, who ran the One Campaign's fight against global poverty until shortly before his death last year, used to say that we live in an "age of miracles." I thought of that while in the village with the family suffering from three generations of clubfoot, where the baby now has normal feet.

Oh, and the baby's name? Her mom named her Miracle.

WHERE TO WRITE

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