

# 'Bag ban' urged in Long Beach

Advocates want plastic out of environment

By AMY NILE  
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. — They're going to ask the City Council to bag it. Single-use plastic bags, that is.

Martha Williams and Larkin Stentz want Long Beach leaders to ban plastic shopping bags in the city. They plan to make their pitch at City Hall during the council's meeting at 7 p.m. tonight.

Williams, a retired elementary school teacher, brought her new, Al Gore-approved lessons back to Long Beach after she attended the former vice president's environmental education and activism program in Denver last March. She's now working on projects in her community to curb the effects of climate change.

Stentz, owner of Green Angel Gardens, is campaigning with Williams against single-use plastic bags.

"We were trying to narrow it down to something doable," Stentz said, so they decided to ask the City Council to ban the bags by a certain date that has yet to be determined.

## Plastic soup

Decades of throwaway lifestyles have created the Great Pacific garbage patch, a massive expanse of floating plastics and trash in the North Pacific Ocean. By conservative estimates, the patch is thought to be at least the size of Texas, although it's almost impossible to accurately measure the vast and ever shifting trash vortex. It spans the Pacific from the West Coast of North America to Japan.

Because plastic bags don't break down easily, they tend to stick around, ripping into smaller and smaller pieces over time. The ocean water near the garbage patch is often



A plastic bag floats in a school of fish. Advocates want to ban single-use plastic bags.

described as "plastic soup," because it's littered with confetti-sized particles.

An average of 46,000 tiny pieces of plastic are floating on every square mile of the world's oceans, according to a United Nations environment program.

## You are what you eat

Fish can't tell the difference between the tiny plastic particles and food. So they end up eating the plastic. Another marine animal comes along later and eats the fish and the plastic inside it. The process repeats all the way up the food chain.

A gray whale died in 2010 on a West Seattle beach with a large amount of garbage in its stomach. The whale had ingested plastic bags, surgical gloves and numerous other products discarded by people.

Not only are plastic bags a hazard to marine life, sea birds and animals, they also pile up in landfills and clog storm drains.

"One of the things we're both realizing is we can get overwhelmed with data," Stentz said. "We want to bring it down to the local level."

## Bring your own bag

Because of the adverse effect plastics have on the

ocean, he and Williams said Long Beach seemed well-suited to lead rural and coastal Washington state in finding a better way to help keep water, fish and the food supply healthy.

At least one county and 13 Washington cities, mostly around Puget Sound and along the Interstate 5 corridor from Bellingham to Olympia, have restricted merchants' use of plastic bags, according to the nonprofit Municipal Research and Services Center. Each ban is a little different. Some require retailers to carry only recycled or reusable paper bags, while others allow certain types of plastic. Many require retailers to charge customers a minimum fee for each bag, others don't.

## Paper or plastic

Chuck Winn, manager of Sid's Market in Seaview, said he doesn't want to see more cities ban plastic bags. For more environmentally-conscious customers, the grocer sells reusable shopping bags and provides paper bags.

"In the old days, all we had was paper," Winn, 73, said. "In fact, we have some folks who still request paper."

The Seaview market takes used bags and single-use plastics from anyone willing to

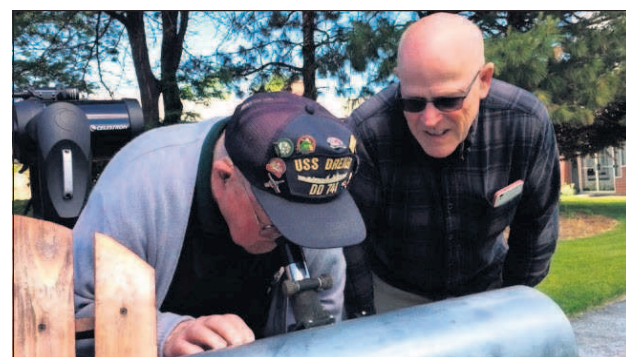
return them for recycling. People can put their used plastic bags, wraps and films into the big recycling bin in the store parking lot on Pacific Highway. The bags are then taken to a Tacoma warehouse to be recycled, Winn said. He said he wasn't sure what becomes of the recycled bags from Seaview.

The warehouse did not return a call for comment. However, in the U.S. they're often melted down and used for composite lumber. They're also commonly made into a new batch of bags that can later be recycled. Making bags from recycled material is more efficient and eco-friendly than making them from scratch.

## 'Enough is enough'

Williams said she'd prefer not to have paper bags, either. She wants Long Beach to move toward using reusable bags. She and Stentz hope the City Council will put together a group to look into what Long Beach could do to reduce its use of plastics. The group could then help the council with rules to put in place to move closer to that goal.

"We're joining in with a mass movement around the United States," Williams said. "Cities around the country are saying 'enough is enough.'"



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus  
Gene Brick, 92, left, and his son, Bartt Brick, peer through a telescope in Madras in June that they made together in 1964. The two plan to watch the upcoming solar eclipse together Aug. 21 as it passes through Oregon.

## Father, son prepare for eclipse after missed viewing in 1979

By GILLIAN FLACCUS  
Associated Press

MADRAS — The last time a total solar eclipse blacked out the sun in Oregon nearly 40 years ago, Gene Brick was working in a timber mill that refused to shut down for the spectacle.

The World War II veteran and amateur astronomer was devastated when his friends raved about experiencing a pitch-dark sky in the middle of the day.

"Everyone who was outside got to see it, and they enjoyed telling me all about it — and I was hurt by that," said Brick, now 92. "But work is work, you know."

Brick will get another chance to witness history this month, when a total solar eclipse begins its path across the U.S. in Oregon.

The one he missed in 1979 covered the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada. This total eclipse will be visible from coast to coast across the nation — something that hasn't happened in 99 years.

Brick plans to watch the event with his son using two telescopes: a fancy new one and one the two crafted together 53 years ago in their basement.

The men will peer at the sun through both during the eclipse's totality, when the moon's shadow completely covers the sun for just over two minutes. They also will use special filters to photograph the eclipse through the newer machine.

For Brick, who survived a kamikaze attack on the USS Drexler during the Battle of Okinawa, the opportunity is the experience of a lifetime.

"I always loved to look at the moon," he said, after peering through the telescope the pair crafted in 1964. "I still do."

The Bricks will have a prime location for their father-son moment. The town of Madras, in central Oregon, is in the high desert, where summertime skies are often clear and cloudless.

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# PORT OF ASTORIA COMMISSION VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



Due to the recent announcement by Port Commissioner Robert Mushen of his immediate resignation from the Port Commission, the Commission is seeking candidates for Dr. Mushen's position (Position 4). Position 4 remains active until June 30, 2019. Position 4 will be up for election in May of 2019.

The Commission is seeking to appoint a new Commissioner to Position 4 at the August 22, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Commission in Open Session. (Note: this is a change from the Port's Regular Meeting originally scheduled for August 15). The Commission will be interviewing candidates during the August 22 meeting.

To be considered for the position, the Commission requests that interested candidates please forward a letter of interest expressing your desire for consideration. Please include your qualifications and stated desire as to why you should be considered. Also, please provide a brief biography or resume along with your letter of interest.

**All applications will be reviewed by all Commissioners prior to the August 22, 2017 Commission Meeting. Candidates must be registered voters of Clatsop County.**



Please mail or hand deliver your documents to the Port Office in Astoria in sealed envelopes addressed to:

**Port of Astoria Commission  
Attention: Frank Spence, President  
#10 Pier One, Suite 308  
Astoria, OR 97103**

Applications must be received no later than  
12:00 noon, August 16, 2017.

For any questions please contact Frank Spence at:  
503-325-2365