

OPINION

editor@dailyastorian.com



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGES
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

DEBRA BLOOM
Business Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

Firefighters deserve applause for COURAGE, DEDICATION

Imagine your phone ringing late at night with an urgent plea to drop everything and come help complete strangers far away. Imagine canceling all other plans and heading out — with no idea of how long you'll be gone or exactly what dangers you may face.

Welcome to the world of Clatsop County firefighters.

This year has been exceptional for crews from Knappa to Cannon Beach who have answered the call and bravely headed off to battle blazes elsewhere in the state and in California.

As they have returned home, begun to regroup and get back to normal as the new year dawns, it's timely to pause and applaud them for their courage and dedication.

This summer, crews from Seaside, Gearhart, Olney, Lewis & Clark, Cannon Beach, Warrenton and Knappa fire districts were first dispatched to fires throughout Oregon.

Throughout late August and early September, more than 50 from the region battled the Milli Fire in Sisters, the Chetco Bar Fire in Brookings and the Eagle Creek Fire in Multnomah County.

On returning, scarcely had they drawn breath and resumed normal family life back home on the North Coast when the Oregon Fire Marshal received an urgent request for assistance from California through a national state-to-state mutual aid system.

The call came late one night in



Although 2015 was a busy year for such deployments, **veteran fire leaders on the Coast cannot recall any year quite like this one.**

mid-October. Remarkably, crews were mobilized and on their way down Interstate 5 the next day, heading to Santa Rosa, California, a city of more than 175,000. There they fought blazes on every side, south and east to Sonoma and Napa, one of 12 wildfires burning in eight counties. The fire killed 22, destroyed 7,000 homes and buildings, and damaged another 500. Damage totaled more than \$1 billion in Santa Rosa alone.

The third deployment sent many of these and other Clatsop heroes back to California, where they spent at least 16 days fighting fires in Ventura County near Los Angeles in fires that destroyed nearly 200 homes and caused 200,000 to be evacuated.

Although 2015 was a busy year for such deployments, veteran fire leaders on the Coast cannot recall any year quite like this one.

In commending this outstanding

commitment to helping their neighbors, there are others to thank, too.

Firstly, employers of fire volunteers know there is always the possibility their staff members may have opportunities to serve on the front lines in far-away places. That means they need a game plan on how to cover their jobs — because they may have to leave their regular workplace for prolonged periods with no definite end date.

Fire departments, and the cities or rural communities they protect, also have to make sure their primary role is covered, going deep into their bench to give additional on-call shifts and other opportunities to serve to those who are not selected to travel to trouble spots.

And families always bear the brunt of supporting first responders. Having loved ones away from home and potentially in harm's way is stressful and worrisome. No one can properly imagine what that's like unless they have faced that situation.

When the firefighters return, they can tell "war stories," of course, but they also bring back valuable experience that they can share with others during drills and training opportunities.

Being neighborly has a cost. But it's the right thing to do. We salute our region's fire chiefs and the agencies that supervise them, for creating the climate in which Clatsop's finest respond with skill and courage whenever that call comes and wherever it takes them.

GUEST COLUMN

Mark Hatfield's widow guards access to Oregon history

We live in a golden age of biography. Ron Chernow's recent biography of President Ulysses S. Grant is only the latest in a bevy of great reads. Among Anne Edwards' large biographical stable is her life of Judy Garland. Gillian Gill has given us Agatha Christie.

The fattest opportunity for Oregon biography is the late Mark Hatfield, whose two terms as governor and five as U.S. senator left an imprint on this state.

Brent Walth — who wrote "Fire at Eden's Gate: Tom McCall and the Oregon Story," the most important political biography of this state — will not be taking on Hatfield. When asked by Hatfield alumni to write that biography, Walth insisted that the late senator's dark side

would have to be in the story. That ended the discussion.

Now another impediment to serious Hatfield research is lying inside the archives of Willamette University. In "Hatfield's Senate papers tucked out of view until 2022," published Dec. 27 in The Daily Astorian, Claire Withycombe of our Capital Bureau reported that the senator's widow, Antoinette, has sealed the papers until she is "in the grave."

The irony in this is that Hatfield was the poster child of the Senate Historical Office for the manner in which he preserved and disposed of his official papers. It's also worth noting that the papers of Hatfield's peers — senators Henry Jackson and Warren Magnuson — are not sealed.

From the day that Mark and Antoinette married in 1958, she has been a highly visible element of the once dynamic political commodity that was Mark Hatfield. In Washington, D.C., Antoinette entered the real estate business. Her earnings afforded the Hatfield family a better life, and her savvy got them nice homes.

Early in my decade as a Washington correspondent, I wrote a feature article on Antoinette for Oregon Magazine. In a town where most people shade the meanings of their words and are always



Michael Lloyd/The Oregonian

Antoinette Hatfield watches husband Mark ponder a question during a 1984 interview.

guarding their escape hatches, Antoinette was refreshing in her candor.

In addition to my weekly newspaper output, I was also doing biographical research on one of Hatfield's predecessors, former Sen. Richard L. Neuberger. And that's when I ran into what I will call the Widow Rule of research.

In addition to the Neuberger papers, at the University of Oregon, I was seeking access to the Wayne Morse papers, also at UO. But to gain access to the Morse papers, one had to be approved by his widow, Mildred. Someone sympathetic to the life of Neuberger would not likely gain access. The Morse-Neuberger feud of the 1950s was one of the most incendiary of Senate history.

As I stumbled through this new territory, I encountered a most helpful older historian. He explained: "When a collection is open, that often means the

widow has probably culled it for the best stuff, which is not there. If the collection is intact, the widow controls access." He continued: "That's why the first step in writing a biography is to shoot the widow."

One winter's evening, my wife and I hosted the Hatfields in our Capitol Hill home. Our other guests, two young friends, were the only people whom we knew who would not want something from the senator.

During the course of the meal, I described my predicament with the Morse papers. Then I delivered the historian's admonition to "shoot the widow." Sitting next to me, Antoinette looked stricken.

Mark had a big laugh. Little did he know. Or did he?

Steve Forrester, the former editor and publisher of The Daily Astorian, is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.



David Falconer/The Oregonian
Oregon Secretary of State Mark Hatfield and his fiancée, Antoinette Kuzmanich, enjoy the Oregon-Washington football game in 1957.