

# OPINION

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## Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

### 10 years ago this week — 2008

DeLaura Beach. Those are fighting words for some folk. More and more people along the North Coast are frustrated that the 423-acre parcel owned by Clatsop County has for 25 years come right to the edge of being sold, and then the deal's fallen through.

The frustration comes from the county having a suitor for the property — one that's desirable to many folks.

And, last year when the Oregon Parks and Recreation offered \$1.32 million for the property, it almost looked like a done deal. The plan was to add the parcel to its neighbor, Fort Stevens State Park. That would have been the perfect groom for this old-fashioned shotgun wedding.

But the deal hit a snag, and fell off the radar for a while.

Not enough? Looks like there might be a blood feud brewing between the Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee and the Board of Commissioners.

Members of the board directed the committee to give input into what they'd like to see in the request for proposals.

In essence, it responded, "Naw, not gonna do it." The citizen committee's argument is that it's been studied enough.

**KNAPPA — The work of a logger is not for the faint of heart. There are dangers at every turn involved in felling a tree at a remote location. However, there are some experiences that cannot be found in the forest.**

For example, speaking in front of judges armed with stop watches and taking detailed notes or scaling a tree with a crowd circled around shouting your name as you try and concentrate on the job at hand could hardly be considered part of your daily tasks.

For the first time, Knappa High School hosted a forestry skills competition Thursday with an estimated 150 students from Sweet Home, Scio, Philomath and Sabin-Schellenberg Center in Clackamas County competing in a variety of physically and



**Knappa's Chad Arnold, 18, sends chips of wood flying as he quickly ascends one of two towering poles in the tree climbing competition as Knappa High School hosted its first forestry skills competition in 2008.**

mentally challenging events.

It was Knappa's second forestry skills competition in its first year as a club since Jeff Skirvin, a world champion in lumberjack sports and Clatskanie graduate, joined the school to teach art and forestry.

### 50 years ago — 1968

SALEM — Atty. Gen. Robert Y. Thornton left today for Astoria to file suit enjoining a developer from further removal of beach sand at the Necanicum River.

Thornton left following a telephone conference with agency heads concerned with natural resources and Gov. Tom McCall.

The suit will be filed to "find out what rights belong to the public" in the area being excavated.

Pacific Development Co. has excavated 450,000 cubic yards of sand as fill for a subdivision at the mouth of the Necanicum.

The Daily Astorian has obtained confirmation from unidentifiable but highly reliable sources that Mitsubishi Company, a \$500 million Japanese industrial giant, has joined other sponsors of Northwest Aluminum company as guarantor of the proposed \$152 million bond issue to build a plant in Warrenton.

Both sides won something at the conclusion Thursday of the state's case against a Seaside development group before Tillamook Judge J.S. Bohannon in Clatsop circuit court.

Judge Bohannon's ruling, termed the most equitable decision possible by interested lawyers listening periodically to the arguments, was as follows:

- Defendants may continue excavating sand in the disputed beach area but not beyond the marked "500-foot line."
- Defendants may not lower the beach under the "six-foot level."

### 75 years ago — 1943

**SEASIDE will be featured in the "Eyes Aloft" program that will be broadcast Monday at 6 p.m. over the NBC network, according to a communication received by Mike Cosovic, chief aircraft observer for the county. The program is dedicated to the voluntary aircraft observers.**

More than 250,000 civilians were stabilized in their war industry jobs in Washington and Oregon today, with the privilege of switching jobs only if they have a certificate of availability issued by their employers.

The plan was drafted along the lines of procedure already in force in the shipbuilding industry, at Boeing aircraft company, and in agriculture, lumber, and non-ferrous metals industries.

**The Astoria Marine Construction company's sixth minesweeper slid into the Lewis and Clark River this week, marking the company's second launching in a week on their second series of minesweepers.**

An urgent call for laborers, carpenters, plumbers, painters and auto mechanics is being made by the local United States employment office in connection with building expansion plans at the Tongue Point Naval Air Base.

**A Clatsop County boy, Ted Anderson, son of Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Anderson of Hammond, was featured in Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's thrilling story of the South Seas in last week's Life magazine.**

Senior nursing students at St. Mary's hospital are the first of any school in Oregon to sign 100 percent with the American Red Cross student reserve, Margaret Woodruff, nursing consultant for Oregon, here from San Francisco revealed today. These young women will enter the armed forces upon their graduation.

## Different playbooks on carbon cap

Medford Mail Tribune, Feb. 4

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek pulled out a Super Bowl analogy in calling for lawmakers to push ahead with an ambitious carbon tax proposal despite the brief 35-day legislative session.

The Legislature, she said, is like the New England Patriots, famous for quickly scoring points when time is short.

"We're going to work hard on the field, and we're going to get that ball across the goal line," Kotek said.

The analogy falls apart, however, when you realize that the House and the Senate, while both under Democratic control, are operating with different playbooks.

Senate President Peter Courtney and Majority Leader Ginny Burdick suggested holding off on passing the cap-and-invest legislation known as the Clean Energy Jobs Bill until the full-length 2019 session. They have a point.

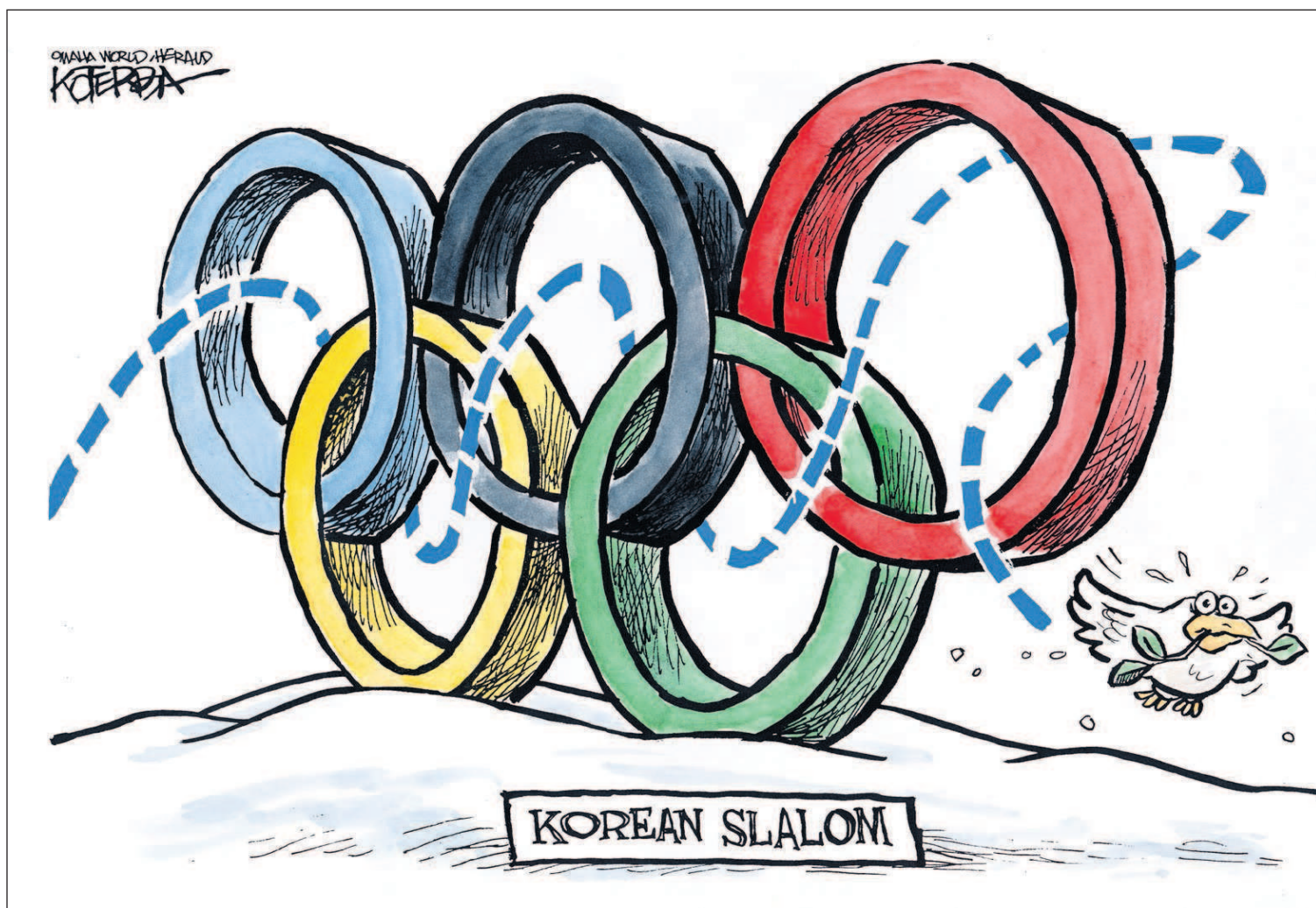
The bill would set a cap on greenhouse gas pollution statewide that would decrease every year, and establish a price for every ton of emissions. The state's biggest polluters — energy utilities, fossil-fuel corporations — would be required to hold allowances for each ton they emit, by reducing their emissions below the cap, purchasing or trading for allowances or arranging for offsets. The proceeds, estimated at \$700 million a year, would be spent to promote clean energy projects, train workers and provide utility bill relief.

That's not necessarily a bad idea, but it's complex legislation to push through in 35 days, and it's not the only major initiative on the table. Lawmakers also have vowed to tackle health care reform, gun control, state employee retirement changes, bond funding for Oregon State University's Cascades campus in Bend. All in a short session originally designed to make budget adjustments and other tweaks that couldn't wait for the next long session.

Supporters of the Clean Energy Jobs Bill worked throughout the 2017 session putting it together, and have worked since to drum up support. But without a buy-in from Senate Democratic leaders on a push to pass it this session, it could stall. It also would go back on a deal made with voters when short sessions were added in 2010.

For years, Oregon did its legislative business only in odd-numbered years, passing a two-year budget and wrangling over everything else in marathon sessions that sometimes stretched for more than six months. Courtney was among those lawmakers who urged voters to allow annual sessions to help the Legislature be more efficient. The measure that passed capped short sessions at 35 calendar days and long sessions at 160 days.

This year, it's possible the Legislature could



face a budget shortfall of \$200 million to \$300 million because of the federal tax reform bill passed by Congress, but state economists have yet to predict precise figures. If that's the case, that should be lawmakers' top priority, and balancing the budget could get in the way of many items on the wish list.

Courtney has said Clean Energy Jobs should pass in 2019, and vowed not to wait any longer than that, but he fears a divisive battle this year could "tear us up."

A last-minute touchdown drive may be exciting on the football field, but it leaves the losing team bruised and angry. Rather than throwing up a hail Mary on cap-and-invest, lawmakers might be better off listening to Coach Courtney, taking a knee and going to overtime in 2019.

## Don't ration Medicaid

Eugene Register-Guard, Feb. 7

A proposal by the Trump administration to impose lifetime limits on adults' access to Medicaid coverage is a recipe for disaster.

Medicaid, which is a joint state and federal program, provides health care coverage to low-income and disabled people. Recipients

are the working poor, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. They have no other option for adequate care.

Oregon's Medicaid program, which is called the Oregon Health Plan, covers about 1 million people, 40 percent of whom are children. (Eligibility for Medicaid is highest among children and pregnant women in Oregon.)

Another 17 percent of the people receiving Medicaid are elderly and disabled. They account for a disproportionate share of Medicaid costs — 41 percent, according to a study by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

The vast majority of people receiving Medicaid in Oregon are the working poor. Eighty-one percent of the people on the Oregon Health Plan are in families with at least one member who is working. These families just don't have access to health care through an employer and can't afford to buy it on the private market.

Cutting off Medicaid at an arbitrary limit would result in a sentence of suffering, and potentially a shortened life span, for people whose only crime is to be ill and poor.

Some with serious ailments or injuries would no doubt show up in emergency rooms in search of relief, as was more common in the past, creating the double negative of increasing health care costs for everyone while depriving these patients of the comprehensive care they

need to become, or stay, healthy.

Setting aside the sheer inhumanity of this, it makes no economic sense.

People who have no health care coverage and so resort to hospital emergency rooms as their only recourse impose higher costs upon hospitals. By extension, other patients see increased charges for the services they receive, and insurance premiums go up as a result.

Rising health care costs are a problem — locally, statewide and nationally. There have been increasing calls for a complete overhaul of the U.S. health care system to contain costs and improve service, including growing support for some sort of single-payer system, which has problems of its own.

There also have been some problems that need to be cleaned up. For example, Oregon found last year that tens of thousands of people who were not eligible for Medicaid, or were no longer eligible, were receiving it. This needs to be dealt with, quickly.

But rationing health care to the most vulnerable Americans — primarily poor people with chronic disabilities and illnesses that require expensive care — is not the way to reform health care. It raises the specter of citizens of one of the richest countries in the world growing sicker, or suffering from worsening disabilities, even dying, because their government says they have reached the limit of their health care benefits.