

Charges filed against Ilwaco charter skippers

Accusations of 'high-grading' for halibut

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — Several local charter skippers and crewmen could soon be reeling in hefty fines and jail sentences.

Following a nine-month Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife investigation, the state in early April filed 37 criminal charges against six men affiliated with Pacific Salmon Charters: David Guggell, 57, of Seaview; Robert Guggell, 56, of Longview; Thomas Merriam, 61, of Sammamish; Brian Cables, 59, of Ilwaco; Patrick Gore, 28, of Deer Island; and Richard Mercado, 52, of Tacoma.

Investigators say the men systematically urged customers on recreational halibut-fishing trips to exceed limits and allegedly wasted

large numbers of fish during the 2017 season.

A woman who answered the company's phone hung up when asked for comment.

"This was unique. I haven't in my 18 years here been a part of a case like this," Sgt. Dan Chadwick of the Department of Fish and Wildlife said Tuesday.

Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers opened an investigation last June, after customers contacted the state about allegedly unethical activities they witnessed during their May halibut-fishing trip. The whistleblowers suspected the crew of "high-grading" — the illegal practice of intentionally catching too many fish, keeping the best ones, and discarding or releasing the rest.

In June, an undercover officer booked a fishing trip. After he claimed to have seen high-grading activity on board the Pacific Dream, investigators sought a warrant. In July, state and federal game wardens searched the company's Port of Ilwaco office and took



Chinook Observer

David Guggell is one of several men charged with illegally 'high-grading' halibut.

a variety of records.

Owner Milt Guggell has operated Pacific Salmon Charters for about 20 years, according to state records. The company has a fleet of seven boats. Some are privately owned by people who book trips through Guggell, but two boats, the West Wind and the Katie Marie, are operated by his sons, David and Robert Guggell.

Every year, the members

of the International Pacific Halibut Commission recommend quotas intended to prevent halibut from being overfished. When each region on the West Coast and Canada meets its quota, its season ends. For 2017, the commission recommended a Washington state sport-fishing limit of 237,762 pounds. The season lasted just nine days.

Fishermen must also abide by a "You get what you get,

and you don't throw a fit," noticed that long-time customers seemed to have more memory problems than recent one-time customers.

At least 30 people did go on the record, saying, among other things, that staff told them to catch multiple halibut, stored the extra catch in a box with no circulating water, sorted catches by size, swapped identifying tags to more favorable fish, dumped smaller fish — many dead — overboard, and lied to regulators about their catches after returning to port. Other customers who were not named in the court documents reportedly corroborated their accounts.

Based on customer estimates, the company allegedly facilitated the illegal catch of 83 to 104 halibut over the course of nine days. Assuming an average weight range for the fish, Pacific Salmon was allegedly responsible for exceeding the Columbia River Area quota of 12,799 pounds by somewhere between 9 and 24 percent, according to court documents.

Some refused to talk, said they couldn't remember anything or denied seeing any illegal activity. One man who had been fishing with the company for 10 years told officers, "I think you're going on a witch hunt." Chadwick said the officer who did most of the interviewing quickly



STRANDED

A male gray whale was found stranded at Leadbetter Point on the Long Beach Peninsula after getting tangled in lines from a crab trap. A research team from Portland State University and Cascadia Research Collective concluded that ropes from the trap likely caused the young whale's death.

John Weldon/NOAA Fisheries

Small cities' building permit programs face uncertainty

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Amid a state-wide housing shortage, the building permit programs of 25 small municipalities could be in jeopardy following a recent state Department of Justice opinion that using private-sector consultants to oversee plan reviews and building inspections may violate state law.

The opinion included in a February memorandum could result in new restrictions on small jurisdictions and require them to have building officials on staff, city officials said.

Small counties and cities, such as the rural city of Aurora, with a population less than 1,000, don't have the resources to hire a building official. Instead, those local governments rely on third-party contractors to provide building review services for them.

"This is going to raise costs in a huge way because we can't cover these costs with our current funding," said Aurora Mayor Bill Graupp. "It will raise costs in housing especially in rural Oregon. Low-cost, low-income housing is hit the worst, which is what we are trying to work on in rural Oregon, and this is a huge spike in the heart for us."

Greg Hinkelman, city manager of Clatskanie, said he would like lawmakers

to pass legislation next year that allows cities to use third-party contractors to review and inspect plans. "The thing that worries me about the DOJ opinion is that it might be turned into rules and an edict that we have to have a building codes official on staff," Hinkelman said. "For small cities, this is devastating. If the state of Oregon is forcing small jurisdictions to hire people for things where we typically contract services out, where does this end? Does it mean I can't use a contract employee as city attorney or a city planner? Does it have to be staff?"

"We've got a system that works and now someone saying 'let's fix what works and it doesn't have to be this way,'" he added.

King City in Washington County has a population of about 3,000 and relies entirely on contractors to administer its building program.

"A full-time or even a part-time building official is an unnecessary six-figure expense or nearly a fifth of our budget," Mike Weston, the city manager, wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

Relying entirely on third parties to conduct a city's building program violates several state laws, according to the memo by Katherine Lozano, assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice's Business Activities Section.

Oregon jobless rate stuck at 4.1 percent

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Oregon's low unemployment rate refuses to budge.

The state Employment Department said Tuesday the jobless rate for March was 4.1 percent — the same as in February, January and December. It was also 4.1 percent in March 2017.

Oregon's nonfarm payroll employment increased by 4,200 jobs last month, following a revised gain of 700 jobs in February.

Manufacturing rebounded in March after a lackluster

February, and state economists say the retail industry has been hiring at a strong clip after a tepid holiday-hiring season. Motor vehicles and parts dealers have been adding a lot of workers in the retail sector, and food and beverage outlets have also been hiring.

Another unemployment measure, known as U-6, was at 8.3 percent in March, slightly below the 8.6 percent recorded in March 2017. The figure includes discouraged workers who stopped looking and part-time workers who want but can't get full-time jobs.

Surfrider Foundation seeks volunteers for Earth Day Action Day

The Daily Astorian

Bring some work clothes, some friends and a surfboard to participate in the Oswald West Beach Cleanup event from 10 a.m. to noon on Sunday.

The Surfrider Foundation, along with the Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve and Oregon State Parks, is looking

for volunteers to help clean the beach and participate in minor restoration projects as a part of their Earth Day Action Day activities.

Volunteers will be treated to a bonfire and barbecue on the beach, as well as time to surf. For more information, contact the Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve at capefalconmr@gmail.com.

WANTED
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA
Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

Car Show! Entry Fee: \$15. Show Opens at 9AM

50's Cruise REUNION

Warrenton Oregon

APRIL 28, 2018 • CAMP RILEA

PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE CLATSOP COMMUNITY COLLEGE "AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY" PROGRAM and other local Youth Automotive Educational Programs.

April 28, 2018
18th Annual Car Show
Camp Rilea - Warrenton, OR
REGISTRATION - \$15.
Active Military - FREE
(with current Military ID)

SHOW TIME FROM 9 AM - 3 PM
JUDGING FROM 10AM-NOON

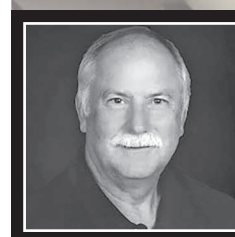
HOT RODS • ANTIQUES
SPECIAL INTEREST CARS
Spectator Parking: \$2 per person in car
Children under 12 FREE
When accompanied by an adult

Kids Games & PRIZES
Loads of Raffles
40+ TROPHIES

PRESENTED BY

For more information call
Burt Young (503) 338-8719

Consult a PROFESSIONAL



Steve Putman

Medicare Products

503-440-1076

Licensed in Oregon and Washington

putmanagency@gmail.com

Q: I am turning 65 this year and have not been taking Social Security Benefits to this point. Will I be signed up for Medicare Part A and Part B automatically?

A: In your case the answer is No. If someone has not been taking Social Security or Railroad Benefits for at least 4 months prior to turning 65 they would then need to sign up with Social Security to ensure they get Medicare Parts A and B.



LEO FINZI

Astorias Best.com

Microsoft REGISTERED Refurbisher

Computers, \$79.99 to \$1999.99, and everything in between.

M-F 10-6 Sat. 11-4
77 11th Street, Suite H
Astoria, OR
503-325-2300

Q: What is your business philosophy?

A: We strive to treat you better than any other retailer. All of our computers include enhancements valued at hundreds of dollars. They come enabled with a word processor, spreadsheet & slide show creator; at home tune up kit; virus remover; photo editor; ad blocker, and much more. At no charge, we also transfer documents photos etc. from your old computer. All while matching online prices from all other dealers.



JEFFREY M. LEINASSAR
DMD, FAGD



503/325-0310
1414 MARINE DRIVE,
ASTORIA
www.smileastoria.com

Q: What are dental sealants, who should get them and how long do they last?

A: Dental sealants are a clear coating place in the deep grooves of teeth, protecting them from food and bacteria that can be hard to remove with brushing. We recommend having your child's permanent molars sealed as soon as they are fully erupted. You can expect sealants to last upwards of 10-15 years and are a safe, inexpensive way to help ensure your child's oral health. Call us today to make your appointment.



ASTORIA CHIROPRACTIC

Barry Sears, D.C.

503-325-3311

2935 Marine Drive
Astoria, Oregon

Q: Does Medicare cover chiropractic care?

A: Yes, it does! Medicare covers chiropractic services. If you have secondary insurance, that can help as well! Call us today for more information or to schedule your appointment.

Now accepting new patients.