

Lundin: 'I wish ... I had seen more gay people on TV.'

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chairs, in this classroom, and I was obsessed with television, as maybe some of you are. And now I'm one of the people who gets to make it."

"And so I just want to let them know that's a possibility for them if they're interested in going that route."

Foot in the door

Lundin studied political science at Reed College in Portland, then worked at political organizations like MoveOn.Org and the Bus Project.

When she decided to get into filmmaking, she took production assistant jobs on film shoots and did commercial work. She enrolled in the film school at the University of Texas at Austin, where she learned to shoot, edit, direct and write — and, sticking with writing, she moved to Los Angeles.

She worked a series of grunt jobs, often waking up at 5:30 a.m. to write her scripts for a couple of hours before going to her day job. At night, she'd spend an hour or so with her girlfriend (now her wife) before going to sleep so she could get up early again.

This cycle lasted about three years until she got staffed on "Riverdale." In that period, she wrote "Ship It" as a screenplay, which she sent out for consideration. Producers liked it, she said, but didn't know what to do with it — a reaction she understands.

"It was a very gay screenplay," she said. Plus, viewers who know nothing about fandom or internet culture may not relate to it. "But I knew there was an audience for it."

Then Lundin found her current agent, who understood the project immediately and sent it out. "Ship It" became the writing sample that fell into the hands of the "Riverdale" folks.

"I think they were looking for people who could write young voices and could speak to what young people care about today," she said.

Meanwhile, the publishing company Freeform Books had also read the screenplay and invited Lundin to turn it into a young adult novel. Having digested countless young adult novels, she agreed.

And so it was that during her first year working on "Riverdale," she was also writing her first novel.

"I was getting paid, too," she said, "which is cool: Get paid to actually write it instead of waking up at 5:30 of my own accord and just working on something that I have no idea if it's going to be good or not, or go anywhere or not ... It felt good."

'Shipping it'

The idea of "shipping it" — when fans want a pair, especially of TV or film characters, to fall into a romantic



Britta Lundin

Britta Lundin on the set of 'Riverdale,' where she's part of a group of writers who develop the scripts for the series.

relationship — is of no small importance in the fandom community.

If you "shipped it" with Han Solo and Princess Leia, you were lucky enough to see that love "go canon" in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, Lundin explained.

But what if you always saw sparks between Han and Chewbacca? You'd have to seek out fan fiction to watch that dream scenario play out — to locate an underground internet community that sees what you see.

Things get tricky, and political, when the characters you "ship" would be a gay match. The rarity of that kind of relationship blossoming on mainstream TV, which would be expected of any straight on-screen relationship, makes it significant.

"It can get very lonely, especially if you're a gay teenager, and all of your favorite gay 'ships' never go canon," Lundin said. "And what it can feel like is, everyone who makes these movies, and everyone who makes these TV shows, doesn't care about people like me. They don't care about the same things that I care about. They only care about the straight couples."

Teenagers look to the media for cues on how to live, she said, and "when you only see one way to live in the media, you start to think that maybe the way that you want to live isn't OK."

Lundin is comfortable with her sexuality now, she said, but "I wish that when I was a teenager I had seen more gay people on TV. I think it would have helped me understand myself better earlier."

Living in both worlds

In "Ship It," a character named Claire who writes fan fiction is obsessed with an actor, Forest, who has a large fan base but whose character is being "shipped" with his male co-star. Forest resents this, especially since he wants to be an action star, and the insinuation that his character is gay, he believes, could risk his career.

These squabbles happen pretty frequently, Lundin said. "The creators of the show and

the fans of the show butt heads over who has control of these characters, who gets to say who's gay and who's not."

Interesting questions arise. "Ultimately, once you make a show and you put it out into the world, who owns those characters anymore? Are they the public's, or do they remain the property of the creator, not legally but emotionally?"

In writing the book, she could get inside both characters' heads — and highlight the forces bringing the characters into conflict — because she's lived in both worlds.

Asked whether anyone — teachers, librarians or others responsible for young minds — pushed back on the novel because of its subject matter, Lundin said, "Not yet."

If "Ship It" were a film, it would be rated PG-13, she said.

"I hope that people who love gay fan fiction read this and say, 'I feel seen. I feel like someone finally wrote a book about me,'" she said. "And I hope that people who know nothing about gay fan fiction read it and be like, 'This was more interesting than I thought it was going to be.'"

'Creative, ambitious'

Jenni Newton, a language arts teacher at Astoria High School, taught Lundin's drama and leadership classes. Newton remembers her student as "creative, ambitious, brilliant, very philosophical," she said.

"She's always stood up for the marginalized, not afraid to be heard," Newton said.

Newton recalled the year the high school was in a pilot program that required drug testing for all student athletes. And Lundin, Newton recalls, "made very clear she was in no danger of failing the drug test, but she stood against it so strongly she quit athletics and joined theater. And that's Britta."

Lundin's advice for teenagers who want to become writers, but who may consider giving up, unsure whether they have the talent: "You're nowhere near that time yet. You're still young. And give it a shot. Go to college. Study things in school. Keep writing. Keep practicing."

Permits: Bank could sustain fishing

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This dilemma has been building for years — especially in the coastal crab fleet — as a swelling tide of skippers approach retirement age. Lacking viable ways to monetize their permits and move them along to "new entrants," this jam-up could gradually rob the economy of one of its last sources of lucrative natural-resource jobs, according to organizers of the new non-profit South Pacific County Fisheries Trust.

"How does a young person get into this business," mused Dale Beasley of Ilwaco, one of the trust's consultants, along with Ed Backus of Collaborative Fisheries Associates.

The trust's board of directors consists of fisherman Jim Long, Ilwaco/Chinook Port Manager Guy Glenn Jr., Phil Allen of the Long Beach Community Foundation, and Richard Carroll of Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Co. The community foundation and ports collectively act as community partners for the permit bank.

Beasley explained the goal is to keep good-paying jobs in local communities. "We're not trying to increase the fishing pressure, but to support the three processors/buyers here," he said. "This is a balancing act ... what we want is to keep the jobs that we have here."

Catch Together

Although it also eventually plans to aid transfers of permits for species like black cod and salmon — or even charter operations — the trust is initially planning to parlay a deal in which Massachusetts-based nonprofit Catch Together will buy a 500-pot, 42-foot vessel permit and lease it for use in south county.

There are 220 crab permits on the Washington coast, with 170 to 190 being actively used. Different permits are for either 300 or 500 pots, with three ranges of vessel size. This will complicate the job of matching potential



Chinook Observer

Crabbing operations are essentially independent small businesses.

sellers with someone who is interested in the specific type of permit being offered.

"It's going to be a matter of how bad somebody wants a permit," and what compromises they're willing to make, Beasley said.

The initial years of making lease and then purchase payments will be challenging, but the program provides an avenue to a lucrative career that would otherwise be almost impossible to get into.

Catch Together — which is backed by the Walton Family Foundation — provides the opportunity for environmentally engaged investors to help maritime communities while making a good return by lending money that's unavailable from other sources. While a bank might typically require a 35 percent down payment, Catch Together and the local trust won't require a down payment. The interest will, however, be a steep 10 percent on a lease-to-own basis, in which the trust will get 2.5 percent of the total permit purchase price per year for the first five years to support its operations.

After a fisherman successfully uses a leased permit for five years, the trust plans to buy the permit from the investor and take over the transaction in the form of a sale to the operator. The trust will seek grant funding and use annual loan interest of \$8,000 to \$16,000 per permit

to pay off the permit's initial purchaser, while banking any excess funds to expand the trust's programs and services.

Specific requirements

The trust's board members will be screening applicants for permit leases, with a variety of requirements including Pacific County residency, fishing experience, and ownership or formal arrangements for a boat and gear, along with commitments from any necessary crew. The trust will play no role in acquiring vessels and gear, partly to limit its liability.

Participants will have to agree to adhere to a "Fisherman's Code of Conduct," which includes provisions such as fishing in ways that won't degrade the resource, and treating crew members fairly.

The trust hopes to conclude one or two deals this year, but will be taking it slow. If successful, it may become a model for similar programs around Washington state.

"It's a hundred-year program to keep the community viable, to keep a healthy fishing industry," Allen said.

"We want to keep our fishermen here, fishing locally. The program's going to evolve and the fleet's going to tell us what they need to stay here. We want this area to thrive and not just barely survive," Beasley said.

Rec: Aquatic expansion planned

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most residents of the Seaside School District, excluding Cannon Beach and Gearhart.

The goal of the expansion is to provide indoor recreation space for the community, Archibald said. With the relocation of Broadway Middle School to a new campus in the Southeast Hills, the recreation district could lose even more space.

"There is no real indoor recreation space for public use, and when the school is built, there will be even less for general user groups and individuals," Archibald said. "We're really excited to move this forward with this plan."

Board member Michael Hinton asked fellow board members to "do our homework" to analyze district leases with the city, and to make sure rights of way are clearly delineated and deeded. "I'm in favor of fine-tuning the plan and getting our ducks in a row."

The district was formed in 1969 and the Sunset pool opened in 1978. Since that time, programming has

expanded to a fitness center, community center, senior lunch program, preschool and playing fields. The district employs seven full-time staff, with an annual budget of \$2.8 million.

Last spring, district board members discussed the possibility of expansion, either funded through a bond or system development charges — the fees paid by builders to the city for essential infrastructure.

Over the past three years, the district has invested about \$60,000 in consultants for building expansion.

Board members met at a workshop early this month, endorsing a base plan rather than an enhanced proposal that would have called for the purchase of all or a portion of Broadway Middle School.

The enhanced plan would have added between \$7 million and \$9 million to the proposal, not including costs for the purchase of school district buildings.

The base plan, prepared by consultants Ballard King with Opsi Architecture, will add a second level to the aquatic

facility on Broadway. If approved by voters, the facility will see a new entrance, gym, preschool rooms, an administrative office, lobby expansion, party room and storage. According to architects, the expanded facility could be completed by 2021.

Board member Jeremy Mills said while he had some misgivings about the timing of the bond, the project's benefits outweighed his concerns. "I think this project is so very needed. I'm definitely on board."

Board members Mills, Hinton, Veronica Russell and Edward Hassan joined board president Alan Evans in voting for the bond proposal.

"We'll deal with curveballs as they come," Archibald said. "It's nearly impossible for us to make every right choice along the way, but as long as I have your support moving forward, I'm hopeful that next month I can provide the timeline and some of the actions that need to take place."

He hopes to have bond language finalized by the board's July meeting, he said.

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