

SEASIDE

Couple pays settlement over Miss Oregon

City, school district stand behind the Phillips'

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The city and the Seaside School District are standing by City Councilor Dana Phillips and Seaside School District board president Steve Phillips after a settlement with the Oregon Department of Justice over their handling of the Miss Oregon scholarship program.

The settlement was reached after the state alleged unlawful trade practices.

They agreed to pay \$150,000 to the Oregon Community Foundation for the Tiffany Phillips Memorial Scholarship Fund, named for the couple's 17-year-old daughter, who died in a 1998 car accident.

The couple had been involved with the Miss Oregon pageant for decades. They will make restitution in three installments and must permanently resign from any office, directorship or position of authority with the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program and Oregon Scholarship Foundation. They are also prohibited from being financially involved in any non-profits or charities.

The agreement "shall not be considered an admission of a violation for any purpose."

Dana Phillips denied that the couple personally profited from the pageant. The Oregonian reported Friday that the couple pocketed \$336,584 from the scholarship fund.

"It's not true," Phillips said. "We did everything we possibly could and answered questions all along."

The agreement with the state does not allege fraud, she said. "At no time did we ever use the Miss Oregon pageant for personal gain or wrongdoing. This is a situation that's really sad and hard to swallow."

Phillips said when she left her role as director of the pageant in 2015, financial documentation was shredded, a situation compounded by a computer crash that destroyed a system backup.

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Steve and Dana Phillips signed a settlement with the Oregon Department of Justice over their handling of the Miss Oregon pageant.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Competitors take to the air after a jump on the course during the Northwest Arenacross Nationals event at the Clatsop County fairgrounds. See more photos of the racers online at DailyAstorian.com

ARENACROSS CRUISES INTO ASTORIA

By COLIN MURPHEY
The Daily Astorian



Young riders get ready to compete at the arenacross event.

The Clatsop County Fair and Expo played host to the high adrenaline Northwest Arenacross Nationals event over the weekend, which featured motorcycle racers of all ages competing on a dirt course before hundreds of fans.

The sport, known as arenacross, is a mix of traditional off-road motorcycle racing that takes place indoors.

Sen. Johnson trashes state auditor's plan to allow citizens to select audit targets

Idea falls flat at committee hearing

By NIGEL JAQUISS
Willamette Week

For about an hour last week, Kip Memmott, the audits director for the Oregon Secretary of State, was having a pretty good run in front of the Legislature's Joint

Committee on Audits.

Under Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's leadership, the audits division has delivered a series of hard-hitting audits over the past two years, as Richardson promised when he ran in 2016.

Some people on the receiving end of those audits — including



Betsy Johnson

Gov. Kate Brown, whose Department of Human Services has been blistered, and the Portland Public Schools board, which took a beating in a recent review — have accused Richardson, the only Republican who holds statewide elected office, of playing politics. But there's no question that the sec-

retary of state has taken seriously the responsibility of serving as the public's watchdog.

Memmott's testimony in front of the committee was nearly finished when Steve Elzinga, Richardson's legal advisor, approached him and appeared to whisper a message.

Memmott then introduced an

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Local author calls all freaks

Minnick plans a show in May

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Have a freakishly entertaining talent to share with the public?

Local author Christopher Minnick and a small group of volunteers are organizing the inaugural Astoria Freak Show, an extravaganza in May benefitting physical accessibility initiatives.

The volunteers are looking for performance artists who can safely perform their



acts inside Jill McVarish's Secret Gallery on 10th Street during May's Second Saturday Art Walk.

"There are traditional freak show things going back to the Jim Rose (Circus) Sideshow from the '90s, like contortionists or bed-of-nail walkers or sword swallows — people who can lift things up with piercings through their tongue," Minnick said.

Minnick is drawn to the freak show in part from his affinity for clown culture, detailed in his fictional novel "Ferment" from 2017, and his upcoming sequel, "Pickled Punk."

In Sacramento, Minnick was the co-founder and chief fun officer of the Institute of Fun, a company producing wine tastings, movie screenings, concerts and other social events. A year ago, he and his wife, Margaret, relocated after falling in love with Astoria while on a trip to the Oregon Coast.

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Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Christopher Minnick, left, and Mickki Langston are two of the volunteers behind the Astoria Freak Show, a benefit extravaganza to be held during May's Second Saturday Art Walk.

