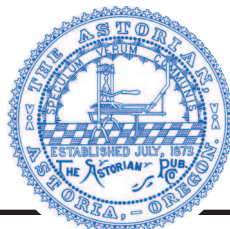


OPINION



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OUR VIEW

Redistricting must be a fair, open process

Democrats hold Oregon's fate in their hands — at least for the near term.

The party has a three-fifths supermajority in the state Capitol this legislative session, gained through a fair election process that has edged in their favor over the past decade. They also have the governor's seat, which means if Democrats are united behind a bill or budget, there's little that can stop it from passing.

It's not because of some conspiracy or an unequal playing field. Oregon voters simply lean left, when considered as a whole, and the state's districts are a fairly accurate assessment of where the voters' allegiances lie.

This accuracy is largely due to the fact that in 2011, the last time the boundaries were drawn for electoral districts, the Oregon House was divided equally between Democrats and Republicans. That even split didn't keep politics or contention out of the process, but did produce legislative maps that both parties could agree upon.

It was the first time since the 1950s that the legislature was able to complete the task on deadline without intervention by the secretary of state or courts.

As the 2020 census nears, new



AP Photo/Jonathan J. Cooper
Legislative leaders and members of the redistricting committees look on as Gov. John Kitzhaber signs a bill implementing new legislative districts in 2011. Oregon lawmakers successfully drew new districts for the first time in decades. To Kitzhaber's right is Suzanne Bonamici, then a state senator.

districts will be drawn. It is likely this will even include carving out a sixth U.S. House district for the state of Oregon.

It's crucial that this process isn't dominated by a single party, no matter how much that party's ideologies and policies may be in favor right now.

We urge serious consideration of the plan to move the responsibility

from the legislature to a nonpartisan committee consisting of people from all corners of the state, who can attest to logical boundaries and balanced representation.

The unfairness of gerrymandering, as it has come to be known, is well documented in states around the country. The balance of a district can be tilted with some clever strokes of the pen, spreading

already minority voters thinner and effectively eliminating their voice. It's a tactic that has been employed successfully by both parties in an effort to solidify power.

And it's bad for democratic representation. No matter a person's political leanings, they must vote with the assurance that their ballot hasn't been rigged into irrelevancy by their own representatives.

As the saying goes, voters should pick their lawmakers and not the other way around.

Late Secretary of State Dennis Richardson was a champion of reform. A redistricting task force in 2017 recommended the job be handled by an independent commission in an open setting with clear criteria for the new boundaries. It would follow models in California and Washington.

It's a critical task. Our population shifts and changes over time, and making sure that voters aren't overlooked keeps our democracy functioning.

No party should have the upper hand when it comes to deciding voting districts for the next decade. That's why we are in favor of amending Oregon's constitution to create a nonpartisan redistricting commission to redraw legislative districts after each census.

Water under the bridge

Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers



10 years ago this week — 2009

After a 10-year absence, daily direct commercial air service between the North Coast and Portland returned Sunday. As the tiny nine-passenger, single-engine Pilatus PC-12 plane touched down at the Astoria Regional Airport, the crowd of approximately 150 that showed up to greet the SeaPort Airlines inaugural flight from Portland International Airport erupted into applause and cheers.

With the Columbia River in all its majesty as a backdrop, members of the steering committee for the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan gathered Friday afternoon in the Kern Room of the Columbia river Maritime Museum to continue deliberating the fate of the riverfront. Their goal is to come up with a workable plan to guide development on shore and over the water that will win the support of Astoria residents.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has seized more than two dozen logs it says a timber crew featured on the History Channel's reality show 'Ax Men' salvaged illegally.

Officers were tipped off after watching the popular series, which chronicles the lives of Pacific Northwest timber cutters, including a father-son team from Aberdeen-based S&S Aqua Logging.

When spring breaks in Seaside, everyone is ready.

The pool is primed, the skateboard park gets busy and the Seaside Civic and Convention Center buzzes with activity.

After a winter of rain, snow and wind, spring break means just that — a break from bleakness and a time to have fun.

But not too much fun.

50 years ago — 1969

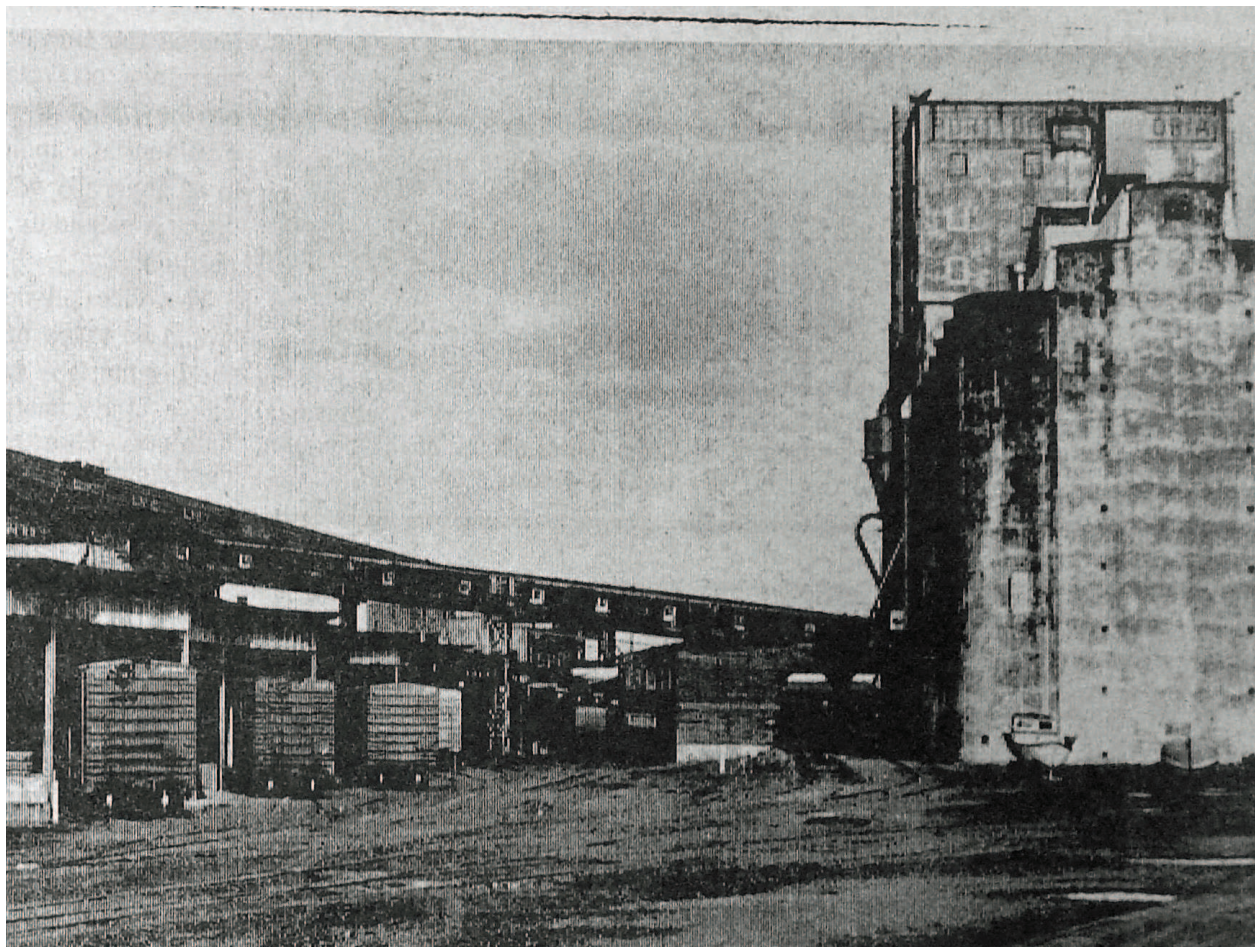
If you want to get into a fight with coast property owners, just use the words "vegetation line."

Gov. Tom McCall's committee on Natural Resources did not swing, and two longtime opponents of beach bills came out, arguing.

Kessler Cannon, the committee's administrative assistant, submitted amendments proposed for a new beach bill, intended to strengthen the one passed two years ago to assert public rights on the ocean shore.

The 1967 bill did not make it clear how far inland the public rights go. It just said the public had acquired rights there.

It also zoned the beaches against construction below a point 16 feet in elevation above mean sea level. That



1969 — The Port of Astoria is negotiating a management agreement with Kerr Grain to take over operation of the port's grain elevator. The elevator has been operated by the Export-Pacific Corp., before which it was run, in turn, by North Pacific Grain Growers, Pillsbury Flour and an Astoria flouring firm.

coincides generally with the vegetation line.

Many persons have accepted the 16-foot line as the limit of public claims to the beach, but Cannon and others say the public has a claim to many areas inland of 16 feet. These are areas where the vegetation line is east of the 16-foot line.

The president of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce said today the first Pioneer Days celebration was "a great success" and the chamber is thinking of making it an annual event.

Some 250 people were served at the pioneer supper held at the conference grounds Saturday night in conjunction with the celebration, held Friday evening through Sunday.

The three-day event was officially proclaimed as Pioneer Days by Mayor Gerald R. Gower, noting that the celebration was to acknowledge and recognize the early residents and pioneers of the Cannon Beach area.

The Port of Astoria Commission and the port manager reportedly held a meeting Monday night at which Manager C.E. Hodges said he would go to Salem next Monday to testify "as a private citizen" in favor of the port-merger bill, which the commissioners oppose.

75 years ago — 1944

Three hundred guests in one evening is the highest record in the guest book of the Blue Room, Tri-Y sponsored teenage recreation center in the YMCA base-

ment, according to Mrs. John Trullinger, president of the YMCA board.

The record was set during the early days of the club, which has been open weekend nights and after games. Attendance on regular nights, open to all teenage girls and boys, has averaged about 45.

Congressman James W. Mott, in a special release received here today, announced this week passage by the house naval affairs committee of a new naval shore station bill, authorizing \$800,000 for construction and development of facilities for training navy personnel at the U.S. Naval Air Station here.

Mrs. L.R. Rogers recently returned to her old home at Cannon Beach, after an absence of 40 years. Her husband is an artist and they have returned to the west to paint scenes along the Oregon coast. She is a sister of Lieutenant Adair, for whom Camp Adair is named, and her grandfather was Gen. John Adair, a prominent figure in the early history of Oregon.

Purchase of all assets of the old Columbia Transportation company ferry service between Astoria and the north shore was announced today by Capt. F.S. Elfving of the Astoria-North Beach Ferry company. The 140-foot waterfront property immediately east of Fourteenth Street between the Columbia River and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle railroad right of way, the Megler station landing on the Washington side of the river and the old ferry boat North are included in the sale, Elfving said.