

IN BRIEF

Sen. Merkley to hold town hall meeting in Astoria on Saturday

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley will hold a town hall meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday at Clatsop Community College's Patriot Hall gym, 1651 Lexington Avenue, Astoria.

People who attend will hear an update on the Democratic senator's work in Washington, D.C., and be able to ask questions and offer suggestions.

The meeting is one of three he plans in Clatsop, Tillamook and Polk counties throughout the day.

The Tillamook town hall is scheduled for 2 p.m. in the Officers' Mess Hall at the Port of Tillamook Bay, 6825 Officer Row Road.

The Polk County town hall is scheduled for 6 p.m. at the Central High School cafeteria, 1530 Monmouth Street, Independence.

— *The Astorian*

Small earthquake hits Oregon coast

ROSE LODGE — The U.S. Geological Survey says a magnitude 3.7 earthquake hit along Oregon's Pacific coast.

The earthquake struck a spot 1.3 miles southwest of Rose Lodge, a town of about 1,900 people, at 9:23 a.m. Sunday. It had a depth of 29 miles.

Minor shaking was reported along the coast from Waldport to Cloverdale, with scattered reports farther inland. No damage was reported.

— *Associated Press*

MEMORIAL

Thursday, May 23

CHESSEY, Clark Delose — Memorial at 1 p.m., Clatsop Post 12 American Legion, 1132 Exchange St. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Road rage

• Camren Hudson, 25, of Astoria, was charged by Astoria police Thursday for reckless driving. He and another driver became embroiled in a road rage incident while merging eastbound on Marine Drive coming out of downtown Astoria. Hudson was observed driving on the sidewalk to pass the other driver and later blocking their vehicle near Columbia Memorial Hospital. Hudson could face more charges, said Deputy Police Chief Eric Halverson.

Burkleo recorded a blood alcohol content of .10%. Police added the reckless endangerment charge because of a 3-year-old in the back seat.

• Ruben Vera-Perez, 48, of Astoria, was arrested by Warrenton police Friday on charges of driving while under the influence of intoxicants and hit and run. Vera-Perez struck another parked vehicle while backing out of a spot in the Warrenton Mini-Mart. He fled the scene before police caught him while parked at Fred Meyer's.

DUII

• Albert Burkleo, 38, of Hammond, was arrested by Warrenton police Friday on charges of driving while under the influence of intoxicants and reckless endangerment. Police caught Burkleo at the intersection of Lake and Pacific drives near Fort Stevens State Park, his vehicle angling off toward the side of the road.

Assault

• Astoria police arrested Karla Stark, 34, of Eugene, Sunday on one charge each of fourth-degree assault and harassment. Police received a call about a disturbance in a room at the Astoria Riverwalk Inn. During an argument, Stark allegedly dug her nails into the face of her boyfriend and kicked him in the face.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Clatsop County Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee, 1 p.m., 800 Exchange, 4th Floor, Astoria.

Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission, 5:15 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin.

Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Gearhart Hertig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY

Astoria Parks Advisory Board, 6:45 a.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 6 p.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria.

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9 a.m., Astoria Transit Center, 900 Marine Drive.

Miles Crossing Sanitary Sewer District, 3 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Coast Guard rescues stranded couple

The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The Coast Guard rescued two tourists stranded Sunday by a high tide on the south side of Indian Beach in Ecola State Park.

Seaside dispatchers called the Coast Guard, which launched an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Astoria. The crew hoisted a woman being hit by waves, and later her boyfriend, who had climbed up some rocks to attempt a rescue but became stranded himself.

The helicopter carried the couple to a parking lot. Emergency medical services reported no injuries.

MORE ONLINE

See a video of the rescue online at DailyAstorian.com



A Coast Guard helicopter crew hoists a tourist from the rocks.

Coast Guard

Activists celebrate death of vaccine bill

Part of a deal on tax measure

By AUBREY WIEBER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Last week, about 100 people stood in front of the Capitol in the rain for a rally about vaccines.

They likely had all been there before, probably several times, for the same issue.

But this time they weren't protesting the legislation that would have ended non-medical vaccine exemptions for schoolchildren.

Rather, they were celebrating victory achieved at the cost of a deep political divide in the building.

House Bill 3063 was controversial from the start and became one of the most consequential bills of the year without even passing.

The vaccine bill had passed the state House and appeared to have the votes to pass the Senate. Gov. Kate Brown supported it.

Then, it became a casualty of Capitol politics.

Last week, state Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, announced he would kill the vaccine bill as part of a deal to get Senate Republicans to allow Democrats to pass a billion-dollar business tax package to fund education.

That the vaccine bill was one of the sacrificial lambs that happened because powerfully motivated citizens didn't give up and cagey legislators channeled their intensity for their purposes.

"All of the sudden, that became very important," Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger, R-Grants Pass, said of killing the bill.

Awkward spot

The deal put Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River, in an awkward spot. He was a chief sponsor of the vaccine bill and had spoken in support of it several times on the Senate floor. The political deal that cost him his bill put him at odds with his fellow Republican senators, but he declined to comment about what happened.

Three months ago, the idea seemed unfathomable that getting more schoolchildren vaccinated would get tangled up with the passage of Democrats' top objective for the 2019 session.



Raisa Piatkoff, of the Russian Old Believer community, stands at a rally Wednesday in front of the Capitol to support the death of a mandatory vaccine bill.

Aubrey Wieber/Oregon Capital Bureau

Republicans were split over the bill and so were Democrats. Their caucuses avoided taking a position.

But a persistent, if not deft, campaign was incessant on social media as well as in the Capitol. People submitted nearly 3,000 letters and emails on the legislation.

Opponents and lawmakers supporting them said that effort was as grassroots as it gets.

Others have said it smelled more like "Astroturfing" — an insider term for propping up a movement to appear as though it's grassroots.

Several seasoned lawmakers said it was unprecedented.

"As a legislator, I get contacted about everything, a lot," Rep. Denyc Boles, R-Salem, said. "I don't know if I've ever seen a group of people ... mount the kind of numbers, touches as far as emails and Facebook and social media, every day, week after week after week."

Opponents stood along the hallways with their mouths taped to symbolize being silenced. They stood out front with signs. They roamed the halls seeking interactions with lawmakers, and they stood in front of the Capitol parking garage mornings and evenings to remind lawmakers of their presence.

"These people have been here since February, and been here, and been here, and been here," said Rep. Cedric Hayden, R-Roseburg. "No one is paying them to do that. It really feels to me as pure of grassroots as I've ever seen here."

Others are skeptical. "It smells too well-or-

ganized to not have money behind it," said Rep. Marty Wilde, D-Eugene, who supported tightening the vaccination requirements. Wilde acknowledged he had no evidence the opponents were funded.

But political spending reports filed with the state show that the political action committee of one of the groups most active against HB 3063, Oregonians for Medical Freedom, has received nearly \$160,000 in political donations.

A good chunk of that money — \$87,443 — came from Portland venture capitalist Jonathan Handley and his wife, Lisa. They haven't contributed since 2017.

The Handleys' son was diagnosed with autism and Jonathan Handley wrote a book about a connection between autism and vaccines. Over the years, there have been many reports and theories on a connection between vaccines and autism, but the scientific community has repeatedly debunked them.

Handley declined to comment for this story.

Oregonians for Medical Freedom is based in Hillsboro and was registered as a nonprofit last February by the law firm of Andrew Downs, who also serves as legal counsel for the Senate Republican office.

Downs declined to comment.

Sarah Bacon, the group's executive director, is active in the Capitol and has repeatedly testified against the bill. She declined comment as well.

'Medical freedom'

The term "medical freedom" is inherently political. It originated in libertarian circles and is a term used by famed libertarian Ron Paul. Similarly minded groups in several states use the term "medical freedom" or something similar.

Amber Sims, a member of Oregonians for Medical Freedom, said the group is entirely volunteer. Its website doesn't list staff, but

she said leadership consists of around 12 people. The group formed to oppose a 2015 bill by Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, the Beaverton Democrat, that would have strengthened vaccination requirements.

Sims said volunteers work long hours to provide information to parents.

"We are not trying to argue efficacy. We are trying to look at the bigger picture and say this is a constitutional violation," she said of mandating vaccines.

Sims said Oregonians for Medical Freedom uses email and social media to reach the public, but its members also make their case in person, visiting with lawmakers and testifying at legislative hearings.

A lot of opponents got involved after hearing about the bill by word of mouth, she said.

"This issue awoke the mama bear and awoke families and awoke people that have strong convictions and do not believe the government has a right to coerce people like this," Sims said. "This was a new line drawn in the sand."

Sen. Sara Gelsler, D-Corvallis, said she is worried the success of the opponents could become a playbook for other issues.

The opposition pulled people from all walks of life. Some, Gelsler said, were pleasant and respectful. She referenced a card and flowers given by an opponent to the bill, thanking her for reading emails and talking to them in her office.

Others, she said, made physically and sexually violent threats, wearing the yellow Star of David and making analogies to gas chambers, communism and Jim Crow laws.

"I got this heinous email about being raped and being raped harder," Gelsler said. "In the past 24 hours, I have been called a turd sandwich, a whore, the C-word, I have been invited to lick, suck and bite various body parts, some of which I've never heard of."

the Astorian

Established July 1, 1873
(USPS 035-000)

Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday by EO Media Group, 949 Exchange St., PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103 Telephone 503-325-3211, 800-781-3211 or Fax 503-325-6573. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Astorian, PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103-0210

DailyAstorian.com
MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MEMBER CERTIFIED AUDIT OF CIRCULATIONS, INC.

Circulation phone number:
503-325-3211

Periodicals postage paid at Astoria, OR
ADVERTISING OWNERSHIP
All advertising copy and illustrations prepared by The Astorian become the property of The Astorian and may not be reproduced for any use without explicit prior approval.

COPYRIGHT ©
Entire contents © Copyright,
2019 by The Astorian.

Printed on recycled paper

Subscription rates
Effective May 1, 2019
MAIL (IN COUNTY)

EZpay (per month)\$11.25
13 weeks in advance\$37.00
26 weeks in advance\$71.00
52 weeks in advance\$135.00

Out of County Rates available at 800-781-3214

DIGITAL

EZpay (per month)\$8.00

IN HONOR OF
Memorial Day

OUR OFFICES WILL BE
CLOSED MONDAY,
MAY 27, 2019

Please note the following deadline changes:

Advertising deadline for Tuesday, May 28
edition is Wednesday, May 22 at 5pm.
Classified deadline is Friday, May 24 at 11am

the Astorian

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500