

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Legislature mourns death of Capitol 'mom'

No more will Lawanda and James Manning carry the American and Oregon flags to start each day's session of the Oregon Senate.

Lawanda Manning died on June 11. She was the wife of state Sen. James Manning Jr., D-Eugene, his beloved legislative assistant, and so much more.

She had become the unofficial Capitol mom and grandmother, who taught the son of Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner, D-Lake Oswego, how to shake hands and look somebody in the eye. She was the compassionate adult who carried a sparkle in her eye, who welcomed all into her office and who expected them to behave properly. She was the tenacious advocate who served as chair of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs.

Throughout their 45-year marriage, they were "the everything" to each other. Colleagues saw them as a single unit — "James and Lawanda, Lawanda and James." The Mannings loved presenting the colors to start a Senate floor session, which they often were asked to do.

Death is such an ordinary part of humanity. Lawanda Manning's passing reminds us that, regardless of beliefs and circumstances, politicians and their staffs are real people, drawn from the ranks of Oregonians. As do we, they face heartbreaks and celebrate joys throughout the bumpy road of life.

Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, has lost 17 friends and family members to COVID-19 in the past year. Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, lost his mother on June 12. Suzanne Carol (Gaylord) Knopp had battled Alzheimer's for over 13 years. Knopp, at Senate President Peter Courtney's suggestion, told stories about his mother on the Senate floor last week.

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Lawanda Manning, the wife of state Sen. James Manning Jr., died this month.

Senators then talked about the Mannings and grieved for Sen. Manning.

"For the last few days, members of our Senate have experienced hardship and sadness and hurt," said Courtney, D-Salem. "The pain and suffering of an individual heart that's in pieces is so profound to each of us that we want to help."

Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod, of Lyons, experienced his own loss last September when wildfire destroyed his home.

"Each of us are honored to be part of the Senate. And when we have tragedy," Girod said, "it's very important that people realize that we come together as one. Not Republican or Democrat. We come together as one, and we will support the other and do whatever it takes to help them get through it. I experienced that when my house burned down."

Legislators are ordinary people who feel the call to public service; in essence, to achieve extraordinary things on Oregonians' behalf. Some legislators have greater impact than others. Some of their work delights us; some displeases or even angers us. And though occasionally a bad actor surfaces, most are good people.

As the 2021 Legislature nears its end, lawmakers deserve our courtesy, our respect and our appreciation even when we are frustrated or disappointed.

The Senate last week overwhelmingly passed Senate Bill 778 to create the state Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement. Sen. Kayse Jama, D-Portland, who 22 years ago came to Oregon as a refugee from Somalia, presented the bill.

He talked about how he felt welcomed into the Senate after being appointed to fill the seat held by

now-Secretary of State Shemia Fagan.

Jama recalled one conversation in particular. Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, told him, "We may disagree on policy, but you will never be my enemy."

"And that had a profound impact on me," Jama said.

**Life at the Employment Department:** In other news, the Oregon Employment Department's well-regarded economic-data website — QualityInfo.org — temporarily was offline on June 14 because the domain registry had not been renewed.

Really. House Republican Leader Christine Drazen, of Canby, hoped the lapse was not an indicator of what lay ahead. "I am just rooting for the Employment Department to get its act together," she said after voting to approve the department's \$6.8 billion budget.

The Legislature last week easily approved the budget, House Bill 5007, and sent it to Gov. Kate Brown.

The department's acting director, David Gerstenfeld, said the 2021-23 budget includes the additional staff hired during the pandemic; expands job-finding assistance, especially for Oregonians displaced by foreign competition; continues implementing the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program; and proceeds with the agency's new computer system.

**Budget whiplash:** Last month, Gov. Brown denounced how legislators were constructing the state school budget. Then she shifted course and announced she had reached agreement with legislative leaders on the \$9.3 billion budget for the next two years.

Then last week she exercised a line-item veto, striking \$200 million from the budget, saying the Legislature shouldn't be taking that money from a rainy day fund. Rep. Suzanne Weber, R-Tillamook, condemned that action in a brief floor speech Thursday.

*Dick Hughes has been covering the Oregon political scene since 1976.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Terrible strategy

A Realtor joins a Clatsop County Board of Commissioners video meeting and says, to the effect, "give me \$6 million, and I can make all your dreams (jobs and taxes) come true."

Can the board be so naïve as to believe this? Can the board also believe a project will come in at budget, and on time, in the inflationary real world?

The competition for new manufacturing locations is Hillsboro, with better access to roads and airports. The \$6 million would be better spent building five day care centers in Cannon Beach, Seaside, Warrenton, Astoria and Knappa.

Those centers are desperately needed now by our working families who already live and pay taxes in the county. People can't go to work until the children are cared for.

To hope that the \$6 million North Coast Business Park build-out becomes a reality is a terrible strategy.

MATHEW PARDES  
Astoria

### Things need to change

I read Steve Forrester's column from June 1, with the premise that it's "a curse to live in an era you do not understand." Forrester referenced, in one particular paragraph, then-Gov. John Kitzhaber's "needless, scientifically baseless and boneheaded attack on gillnet fishermen."

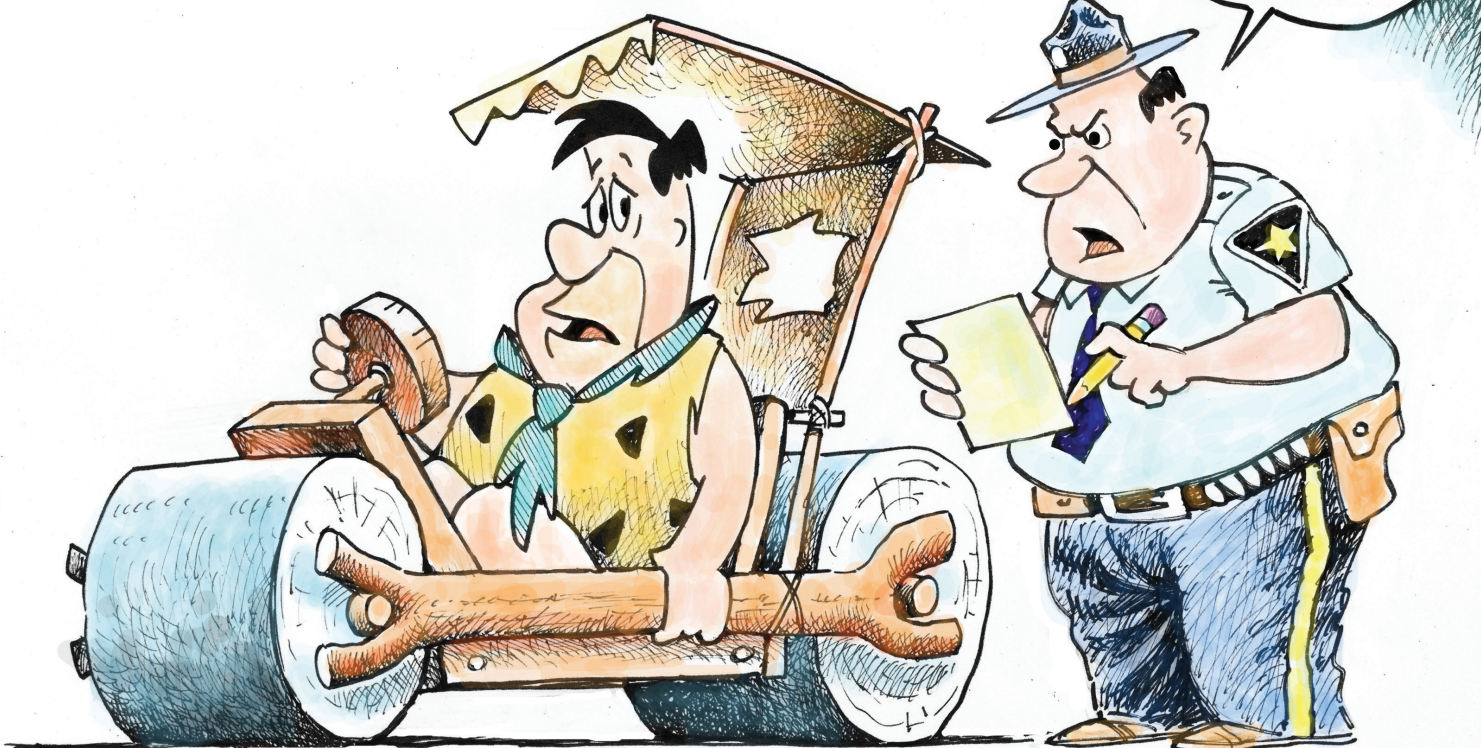
The paragraph ends asserting Gov. Kate Brown's lack of desire to do anything to undo this policy, which clearly has not worked. This portion of the column caused me to think about another bill from this session, Senate Bill 59, which just passed both chambers in Salem and was signed into law by the governor.

SB 59 simply eliminated the sunset on the Columbia River Fisheries Endorsement Fund. Sport fishers' proceeds went to a variety of different programs directly related to salmon at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

However, the bill was amended to include a provision which ties the hands of ODFW commissioners' authority to make fish allocation changes on the Columbia River, potentially helping our local community.

The bill says if the commission makes changes which may positively impact the commercial fishing fleet, the Columbia River Fisheries Endorsement Fund goes away, and the \$2 million fee gener-

## Record number of older vehicles on US roads ...



APOLOGIES TO HANNA-BARBERA

## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

ated. ODFW should align itself to the science-based changes made in Washington state.

The sport commercial industry controversy is nothing new. Policies need to be changed. Gov. Brown should lead that change, instead of urban politicians setting policy to the detriment of rural Oregon. This policy harms jobs and consumers. Things need to change.

TODD OLSEN  
Astoria

### Seeking input

The Sunset Empire Transportation District is seeking public input on proposed schedule changes to Routes 10, 15, 16, 20 and 101.

The purpose of the proposed changes is to improve bus on-time performance, increase reliability and add additional frequency to Route 101. The proposed route changes are available to review on the SETD website at nworegontransit.org

Printed copies are available at the Astoria Transit Center or the Seaside Transit Office and posted in bus shelters, including at the Astoria Safeway, Warrenton Fred Meyer, Seaside Avenue A and Cannon Beach Mid-Town bus shelters.

Please review the proposed changes, and submit written comments at the Astoria Transit Center, 900 Marine Drive, in Astoria, or at the Seaside Transit Center at 39 N. Holladay Drive in Seaside.

Comments may also be emailed to mary@ridethebus.org. All comments must be received by 3 p.m. on Wednesday.

All public comments received concerning the proposed route changes will be submitted to the board. Public comments will also be taken during the SETD Zoom board meeting at 9 a.m. Thursday.

If approved by the board, the proposed route changes will be implemented on July 1. For information, contact Mary Parker at mary@ridethebus.org or 503-861-5370.

JEFF HAZEN  
Executive director, Sunset Empire  
Transportation District  
Astoria