

Professor: May run from Brookings to Astoria

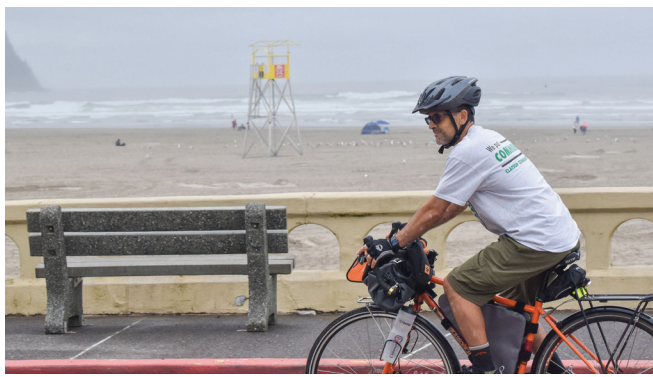
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back, it was the best decision I could have made,” he said. “I had access to professors with at least master’s degrees who were well-trained and had gifts in their subject areas.”

Along the way, Rojas-Galván intends to stop at each of Oregon’s 17 community colleges. He hopes to meet with professors and college representatives to discuss how he and others may be able to help with various expenses and concerns. He describes the ride as the perfect intersection between his passions for community college and adventure.

Despite the selfless nature of Rojas-Galván’s feat, however, he remains soft-spoken and humble, as if his ride is more of a personal responsibility than a gift.

“I think I’m just an average person. I’m certainly not a gifted athlete,” he said. “Running is my true passion, I wouldn’t even call myself a cyclist.”



Russ Dickerson

Fernando Rojas-Galván is biking to raise money for Clatsop Community College.

Angee Hunt, the director of the college foundation, admires Rojas-Galván’s determination. The fundraising, she said, is perhaps far more crucial to students than one might expect.

“I think people really underestimate just how expensive textbooks can be,” Hunt said. For many students, expenses add up fast.

A 2019 #RealCollege Survey from Temple University that sampled responses from 110 Clatsop students revealed about 63% of the

student body had experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, homelessness or a combination of the three in the past year.

Though the school still managed to raise over \$60,000 in an online special appeals campaign this past year — a campaign that helped create the school’s newly-opened food pantry — Hunt still worries the numbers revealed in the 2019 survey could worsen amid the pandemic.

They hope that the money raised from Rojas-Galván’s

ride will not only provide supplementary funding for students, but raise awareness of the power and importance of community colleges everywhere.

“We heavily take these institutions for granted. It’s a place where people with so many different passions can come together,” Rojas-Galván said. “I simply ask students and community members to take into account the wealth of knowledge that is available at each and every community college.”

Hunt notes that, whether or not he’d ever acknowledge it, Rojas-Galván remains a role model for the community. “It’s a great opportunity to showcase our school, and a great opportunity for Fernando to be an ambassador for not only Clatsop CC, but for community colleges everywhere,” she said.

As Rojas-Galván begins his journey, his next mission is already front of mind. Humbly, he suggests he may run from Brookings to Astoria.

Supply chain: ‘It’s been a challenging year’

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and container shortages and delivery problems on the West Coast,” Newenhof said. “It’s been a challenging year.”

He and his employees have tried to be proactive, buying larger quantities of items when those products are available, preordering items they’d never had to worry about before.

“Just when one product line gets back to normal, another one has a problem,” Newenhof said.

Then there was the skyrocketing price of lumber.

The cost of construction-grade softwood lumber spiked during the pandemic due in part to related labor force shortages and shipping disruptions. High demand for the product in both the private and commercial sectors also had a role in driving up prices.

A deck that would have cost \$1,500 to build last year is now more than

\$4,000, Newenhof said. A house package City Lumber quoted in March for around \$82,000 suddenly became \$127,000 in June. Contractor Corey Ham’s estimate for a lumber package for a house he was hired to build in Manzanita was \$40,000 initially. By this spring, the cost was closer to \$85,000 or \$90,000.

His client, architect Darren Doss, could weather the increase and Ham had included contingencies, but Ham started encouraging customers to wait until lumber prices dropped.

People are still calling him anyway, hiring him for jobs. The prices haven’t fazed some clients.

“It’s just so shocking how much it costs to build a house now,” Ham said. “I feel a little embarrassed even though there’s nothing I can do about it.”

At City Lumber, the climbing lumber prices didn’t seem to deter customers at first. But major jumps

in price in 2021 did.

“With low interest rates, if you are financing a project, you might be able to afford the project,” Newenhof said. “But if you are paying cash, it starts to get real difficult, and people are putting things off.”

Though lumber prices are beginning to drop now, contractors and others in the industry do not expect prices to return to pre-pandemic levels. Newenhof predicts prices will drop much more slowly than they rose.

“We have truckloads of lumber, plywood and siding booked out until October,” Newenhof said. “We are worried that we will be buying those truckloads at prices higher than we can sell them for.”

‘Wood is a precious commodity’

To address product shortages, City Lumber has been looking at alternate products. But so has everyone else. Gradually, many of

these alternatives are getting harder and harder to find, contractors say.

In the Pacific Northwest, lumber has long been abundant, Doss said. For his own projects, the cost of lumber always seemed relatively inexpensive in the grand scheme of things.

“And as Americans in the Pacific Northwest, we’re spoiled in the sense that wood has been readily available,” he said.

But the pandemic and the stress on industries and supply chains has made Doss rethink how he values that particular resource.

Doss is moving away from traditional designs that require a lot of lumber to frame out a house. Instead, he is turning to a style of building called advanced framing. It is not an approach that will work for every house, but it uses less lumber.

“Wood is a precious commodity,” he said. “Let’s treat it as one.”

Camps: ‘A concerted community response is required’

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Clatsop County, have seen an increase in this type of vandalism and negative behavior.”

Williams said the department has worked with the Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office forest patrol deputy to identify problem areas and contact people living in the woods, but he said one deputy is not enough.

Sheriff Matt Phillips said it is also difficult for deputies to enforce rules and keep track of people because of the guidelines for camping on forestland. People can camp at a location for 14 days in a row in a 35-day period.

“These are symptoms of a bigger problem,” Astoria District Forester Dan Goody said. “But I can tell you personally — in fact — the majority of the people we’re talking about know the rules as good as anybody, and they know when day 14 is up, they’re moving their camper to another spot up a different spur to start the clock all over again.



Abandoned vehicles and trash are being left on state forestlands.

“They get lost on the radar and they get found somewhere else miles away, and the clock starts again. So they’re playing it. And this is a subset of a bigger problem with some homeless communities in the forest, whether

it’s in the city of Warrenton ... or by Mill Creek in the east end of town.”

Williams and Goody suggested the county work with the state in creating a multi-agency impound yard to dump vehicles and RVs. There is

some waste Recology Western Oregon in Astoria does not accept. They also asked the county to consider adding more forest patrol deputies to the sheriff’s office.

“I think it’s a growing problem,” Commissioner Lianne Thompson said. “I think it’s a problem related to people being responsible. So are people irresponsible because they don’t know any better or because they can get away with it?”

“But then there is enforcement of consequences. So we have problems all the way along. Maybe we need to look at state law. Maybe we look at county ordinance. A concerted community response is required.”

Commissioner Mark Kujala, the board’s chairman, said, “My experience just in Warrenton alone — seeing a lot of these encampments on private forest lands and the stolen property that goes with it and the needles and the real hazards — it’s something that we’ve got to find some solutions for, and be creative in doing so.”

Regatta: City’s longest standing annual event

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The boat parade, titled the Highwater Boat Parade, will begin at 5 p.m. and will be viewable along the Astoria Riverwalk. Boats of all sizes can be used during the race. Boat captains can preregister for the parade at astoriaregatta.com/parades

Parade participants can compete to win awards, including “Best of Sail,” “Best of Power,” “Best of Commercial,” “Best of Service,” “Best of Classic” and “Queen’s Choice.”

“The Regatta board came together this year with the goal of reviving some outdoor events that could be held safely during the pandemic,” Grothe said. “We are excited to host the Seamen’s Memorial and the Highwater Boat Parade this year. I anticipate that we’ll be celebrating a return of the full festival in 2022.”

Astoria High School graduate Annalyse Steele will act as the festival’s Regatta queen. She was crowned in 2020 and will continue to serve through 2022.

The festival’s court also includes princesses Zoey Alexander, of Seaside; Mia McFadden, of Warrenton; and Gabrielle Morrill, of Knappa.

Throughout summer and during the week of the festival, the regatta association will share photos on social media platforms as part of its celebration. Local businesses are also encouraged to decorate their front windows with Regatta regalia the week of Aug. 11 to Aug. 14.

The festival is the city’s longest standing annual event. It began in 1894 and has celebrated regional maritime history and culture every year, with the exception of 2020, World War I, the Astoria fire in 1922 and World War II.

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We recommend running these once a month.


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Q: A doctor said that nothing is wrong but I am still having problems. Can you take a look at me?

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Q: I can’t afford regular dental care. Are there some resources available to me?

A: We have third-party financial groups that we work with, including Care Credit, Springstone, or your personal bank may offer low-interest loans. Dentistry itself is not necessarily expensive, but neglect and abuse are. Call to consult with us on your options.


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Q: What are some simple ways I can maintain mental health?

A: Creating a daily routine of self care helps you locate good mental health: Here are some suggestions:

1. Maintain a consistent sleep and wake schedule
2. Eat regular healthy meals to fortify brain chemistry
3. Take a walk, listen to music, watch something funny
4. Stay connected to those you love and who encourage you
5. Avoid abusing substances such as alcohol/other drugs
6. Practice self compassion, and daily affirmations

Scooters: Concerns over company’s policy on helmets

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At a city work session in June, Mayor Bruce Jones and City Councilor Tom Brownson were in favor of discussing the logistics of a pilot program with Bird, but Councilor Joan Herman and Councilor Roger Rocka were opposed. City Councilor Tom Hilton said he was personally not in favor of developing a program with Bird, but

wanted to hear more feedback from the community.

Over the past few weeks, city councilors received a flood of comments, emails and texts about the scooters — on par with what city leaders saw during discussions about a controversial hotel proposal, Jones said.

The response from residents to the electric scooter proposal was a resounding, “No,” city councilors said.

Both Jones and Brownson said they had rethought their previously held positions as a result. They shared their constituents’ concerns about safety and irresponsible scooter operators and would vote against developing a pilot scooter program with Bird, they said.

The company recommends but does not require riders to wear helmets — a significant concern, Jones

said.

“It’s not going to work for Astoria, as far as I’m concerned,” Brownson said.

But, he noted, the only reason the City Council had any say in this electric scooter proposal was because the company needed access to city property. Another company with a physical storefront could choose to rent out scooters without first consulting the city.