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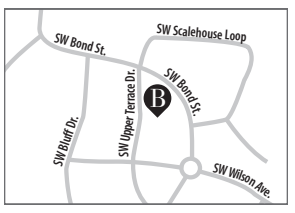

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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

Why does Garibaldi have a phone booth? Ask the town's sole and 'tallest' barber

BY SAMANTHA SWINDLER
The Oregonian

As the sole barber and proprietor of Tami's Barber Shop in Garibaldi, Tami Stover has taken clippers to most of the men in town.

A hand-painted sign above the door proclaims the shop as home of the "Tallest Barber in Garibaldi," a title the 5-foot-tall Stover claims by default.

She's the only barber in the town of about 800 residents on the Oregon Coast.

Stover opened her barbershop 25 years ago and initially had to win over some skeptical clients.

"I'm a lady barber, and in a logging, fishing town, a lady barber is kind of a scary thing," she said. "One of the guys said, 'You're not very tall,' like that affects being a barber for some reason. I said, 'Well, I'm the tallest one in town.' It just kind of clicked, and it's been there ever since."

Stover's sense of humor is on proud display outside her shop. In addition to her tallest barber designation, a mailbox with the words "Air Mail" painted on the side is affixed to her store awning.

And the shop's "cellphone booth" has become a quirky roadside attraction along U.S. Highway 101.

Because of the pandemic, Tami's Barber Shop is appointment-only. But years ago, it was a walk-in shop where customers would wait their turns inside the small space.

"I would have four or five guys sitting here," she said, "and it was when cellphones first started coming into the world, and 99% of my customers are over 300 years old, so they would get a call and they can't hear, so it's on speaker."

After joking about hearing the results of one too many colonoscopies over speaker phone, she told her husband that she needed a cellphone booth so they could take their calls outside.

Samantha Swindler/The Oregonian

Standing at around 5 feet, Tami Stover is the tallest barber in Garibaldi. She is also the only barber in Garibaldi, a town of about 800 residents on the Oregon Coast.

"One of the guys said, 'You're not very tall,' like that affects being a barber for some reason. I said, 'Well, I'm the tallest one in town.' It just kind of clicked, and it's been there ever since."

— Tami Stover, sole barber and proprietor of Tami's Barber Shop

"It gets stormy and rainy and nasty. I can't ask the guys to go stand outside and talk on their phones," she said. "I was just teasing with my husband, 'I need a cellphone booth where I can get them out of the weather.' "

Her husband, also a jokester, built one for her. It's the same size and style of an old pay phone booth, minus the pay phone.

"Now it's turned into a tourist thing," Stover said. "People walk by and they stop. They come back, and they take pictures of each other in it. It's goofy. But I'm goofy, and he was goofy."

Samantha Swindler/The Oregonian

The Garibaldi cellphone booth was a joke built by Gerry Stover for his wife's barbershop.

Her husband, Gerry Stover, died in 2019.

"It's still kind of a little piece of him that's hanging out, out there," Stover said.

The booth never really took off among her clientele, though from her vantage at her barber's chair, she sees the occasional pedestrian jump inside to get out of the rain.

"People do stop and take pictures," said Dawn Ritter, manager of the Ghost Hole tavern next door. "Where else do you see that?"

Along with the Ghost Hole, Tami's is one of the oldest businesses in town. Ritter, who grew up in Tillamook County and has worked at the tavern for 12 years, remembers when the cellphone booth was installed.

"It was awesome, because it was just a couple years after the real phone booths went away," she said.

The booth has weathered a decade of coastal winters. It's been thumped by many a patron leaving the parking lot. But it lives on, and it's part of what makes Garibaldi "goofy," Stover said. "And we like it that way."

Stover, who grew up in Boise, Idaho, started as a hair stylist 42 years ago, cutting women's hair. She later got her instructor's license at a beauty and barber college.

"And I just fell in love with barbering," she said. "Men are so easy. They're so fun. I cut hair, we just B.S. Nobody gets all ruffled if their bangs are crooked."

She keeps steady business among the fishermen, Coast Guard members and the locals in Garibaldi, though she's lately decided to slow down and work only four days a week.

"I have no desire to hang up my clippers, but I don't want this to turn into a job. It's never been a job," she said. "I get to make a living running my fingers through men's hair. What could be better?"

Washington Legislature OKs requiring job listings to post salary info

BY LAUREN ROSENBLATT
The Seattle Times

Employers in Washington state will soon have to disclose the starting salary for open positions to job applicants — at the beginning of the recruiting process — if a bill that recently passed both chambers of the state Legislature becomes law.

Under the proposed legislation, employers with 15 or more workers would have to disclose the hourly pay rate or salary, or a range of what they could be, as well as give a general description of benefits and other compensation that could be offered in a job posting.

That's a change from the current requirements that say an employer must disclose a salary range and benefits only when a job offer has been made — and the applicant asks for it.

Oftentimes, applicants can't easily access pay information when they apply for a job, said state Sen. Emily Randall, one of the bill's sponsors. That can create an imbalance among applicants if some candidates have a connection at the company that can shed light on what the employer is willing to offer, or if they have past experience negotiating a higher pay rate.

Women, people of color and other individuals from historically underrepresented groups are more likely to be missing those pieces to effectively negotiate a higher pay rate, said Randall, a Bremerton Democrat.

"I've never been a business owner, but I have hired a number of people," she said at a public hearing in February. "I always know what we're able to pay ahead of time. I have an idea what the range is.

"For us to be transparent about that is a pay equity issue."

Employers would be held to the same standards when workers apply for new positions or promotions within the same company. Postings for internal transfers would also need to include a wage scale or salary range.

The House passed the legislation, Senate Bill 5761, Tuesday after the Senate moved it forward in February. It was delivered to Gov. Jay Inslee on March 11. If he signs, the law will go into effect in January 2023.

Already, the legislation has drawn criticism from trade groups advocating for business owners. Bob Battles, the director of government affairs at the Association of Washington Business, said the bill would be "cumbersome" for small employers. Bruce Beckett, a lobbyist with the Washington Retail Association, said it could lead to unintended consequences for job seekers if their past salary is listed on a job posting that future employers can easily track down.

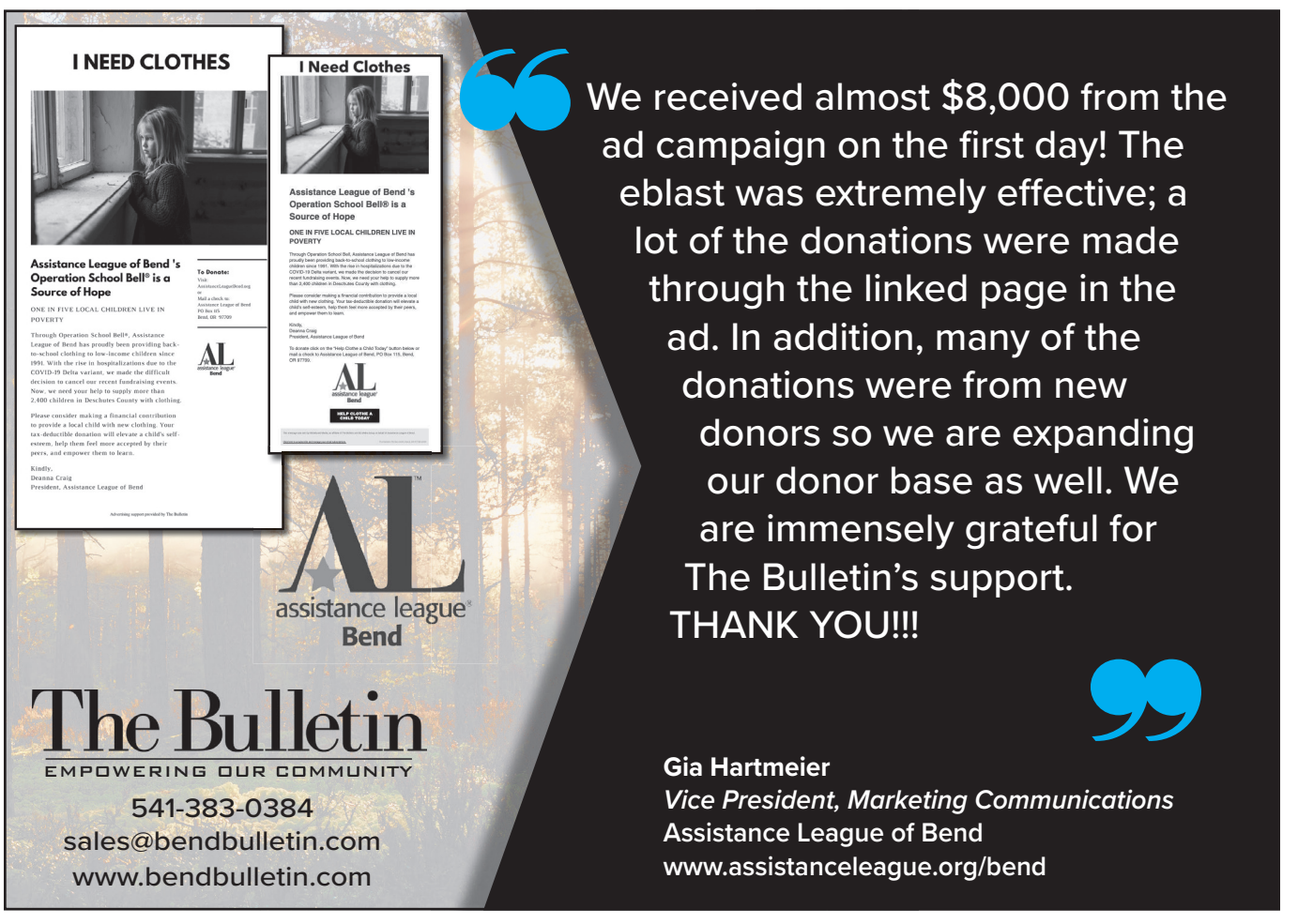
Based on the legislation's definition of "posting," it's clear employers wouldn't have to include a salary range on "help wanted" signs hanging on their window, said Jim King, from the Independent Business Association. But he's less clear about what counts as a qualification. Does a flyer for an "experienced" line cook need to include salary?

"We're trying to keep this as simple as we can" for small business owners, King said, adding that he felt the head count number determining whether employers would be required to disclose pay information should be higher. An amendment to increase that threshold from 15 to 50 employees failed to pass the House.

Advocates of the legislation say it builds on past work around pay equity, like banning employers from asking job candidates about their salary history.

For Cher Scarlett, a software engineer from Kirkland who testified at a public hearing in support of the bill, the legislation is a way to ensure she and her colleagues aren't missing out on compensation they could be getting, if only they knew to ask.

Scarlett has led a charge to bring attention to allegations of pay disparities and gender discrimination at companies including Apple, Starbucks and Activision Blizzard. She has launched a wage survey at Apple to study worker salaries around the country and investigate anecdotal evidence of a wage gap.

In her own past jobs, Scarlett said her salary has been depressed because employers asked for her salary expectations, rather than disclosing how much they could offer. She's not in a position to negotiate, she said. In need of a steady income, she can't risk losing an opportunity.

"We deserve to get paid what we're worth," Scarlett said. "And we deserve to know what that value is."