

# A federal tax incentive designed for health, fitness

As a young man years ago, I learned the power of language and words. My parents had a strict standard for what was acceptable and what wasn't in our home and they made it clear that if we brought language that may have been common on the playground or on the basketball court home, there would be some consequence.

But there's one word that wasn't mentioned frequently in my home and not because it was a swear word: politician.

Politicians often get a bad rap and while some deserve it completely — with their seemingly never-ending trail of bureaucracy — there are many that actively seek to improve the lives of the constituents that they are elected to serve. And thus, we have a modern example: The Personal Health Investment Today Act.

The PHIT Act was recently introduced to give all Americans a tax incentive to get active, stay fit and improve their health. The bill would allow consumers to use money in pre-tax medical accounts to pay for physical activity expenses. We know that one of the barriers for individuals and families to exercise more is cost. The PHIT Act reduces that barrier to increased physical activity.

Perhaps even more important than that reduction of that cost barrier though is the messaging that this Act communicates to all people. That message is one that I've heard many times and goes back to the

**SKY BOX**  
SKYLER ARCHIBALD



adage attributed to Benjamin Franklin that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

In our culture we need to face the fact that times have changed. Gone are the days where walking and biking were common modes of transportation. Television and other technology have expanded in their offerings and played a dramatic effect on all people, but particularly children. All the meanwhile participation in recreational sports for children is declining and the opportunities for recess and physical education time for kids has significantly diminished.

The results of those changes are staggering, in terms of overall public health. It is estimated that 80 percent of all heart disease, strokes and Type 2 diabetes along with more than 40 percent of cancers could be prevented if we eliminated the four key behavioral risk factors that fuel chronic diseases: physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, tobacco use and too much alcohol.

This has a profound impact on each and every one of us. The CDC estimates that chronic diseases will cost America \$2 trillion in medical expenses and another \$794 billion in lost employee productivity every



year through 2030.

The PHIT Act demonstrates the understanding that prevention of health disease, particularly the diseases that are heavily afflicting our society in obesity and diabetes, is worth the investment. The World Health Organization equates an investment of \$1 in activity leads to \$3.20 in medical cost savings.

Written with strong bipartisan support, the bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow a medical care tax deduction for up to \$1,000 (or \$2,000 for families) for qualified sports and fitness expenses. These expenses would include memberships at recreation or fitness facilities (like the Sunset Empire Park and

Recreation District), youth and adult sport leagues, exercise classes, youth camps, running or other fitness events, martial arts, gymnastics and more!

This would be a change in the code but also a change in the philosophy of our culture. Currently, citizens can use pre-tax medical savings accounts for reimbursement of medical expenses after you become sick. But the PHIT Act addresses many of the reasons that Americans are spending billions of dollars in medical treatment: inactivity and lack of exercise and incentivizes those opportunities to get more active by providing tax savings for those expenses.

PHIT has already been supported by our state representatives Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, Suzanne Bonamici and it will continue to hopefully gain momentum as it heads to Congress.

There are opportunities to support this worthwhile act and I'm incredibly inspired by the development. It's a great reminder to all of us as we all consider what we can do to become more active. That activity and any investment in time or resources made towards our own physical health will pay significant dividends down the road.

*Skyler Archibald is the executive director for the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District.*

## LETTERS

### Orr deserves your vote

“Follow the money,” as the saying goes, and then vote for John Orr as our next State Representative. John's campaign has been funded by small contributions and supported by people who actually live here. He remains free to do his own research and take his own positions for the future of Clatsop County and our voters. He will not be daunted by the pressures of Wall Street Timber companies, Portland-based groups, or the fossil fuel companies that want to use the Columbia River as a watery highway to other countries.

John has background in social service issues having represented children in the court system. He has worked with NorthCoast land conservancy groups; he's an experienced lawyer and a jazz musician to boot! He is articulate, and can hold his own. Among those he has worked with, he is known as a man of integrity who likes doing his research, is bright and cares about his community.

John is ready to contribute in this way, and has his political feet securely on our ground. If you haven't voted yet, do so for John Orr.

**Jan Mitchell**  
Astoria

### Vote no to Sunset Rec building expansion

I'm writing this letter in response to the article titled “Sunset Empire Recreation District Bond Will Go To Voters” published Wednesday, April 18 in The Daily Astorian. All I have to say to the proposed expansion is, “No, no, no! A definite and unequivocal NO!”

Over the last few years, the district has spent over \$60,000 in consultation fees for the proposed “multi-million dollar expansion of

the aquatic facility,” all of which was approved by the board of directors. It appears that Skyler Archibald, executive director of the district, is directing the board, rather than the other way around. This isn't surprising given the fact that none of the board's members use the pool.

I urge in-district voters to say “no” to the bond measure and proposed expansion. We don't need bigger. What we do need is better management of the facility and tax dollars we already have.

**Marti Waje**  
Seaside

### Orr for state rep

I took a picture from the column of a commercial fishing boat returning up the Columbia River. What wasn't in the picture that day, or any other day, was the 200 plus liquefied natural gas tankers that would have polluted the river, fish, and air.

It was Citizens of the Lower Columbia Area guided by the Columbia Riverkeepers who stood up and said, “Not on our watch.” John Orr was one of them.

I can still have my favorite locally caught, grilled salmon that hasn't been swimming around in chemically polluted water from the proposed LNG terminal on the Skipanon. Yum! Thanks John for helping.

If you think protecting natural resources like commercial fishing and responsible timber harvesting is important, consider that in 2014, our area unloaded more unpolluted fish than any other west coast port. John thinks that's important.

I have allergies that don't take kindly to breathing the 2.6 billion tons of methane gas and carbon dioxide that the proposed LNG terminal would have released annually. Thanks John for helping keep our air some of the cleanest on the planet.

As president of the North Coast Land Conservancy, John showed actions speak louder than words. Oregon is unique and the north Oregon coast is one of its jewels.

John is running for state representative. We believe we need someone who has proven he will fight to protect our home.

John Orr will get our votes because he has earned them the old-fashioned way — he worked for it.

**Carl Dominey**  
Astoria

### John Orr for Oregon District 32

Don't be fooled by high priced campaigns financed by large donations from timber barons, PDX teacher's union and others. John Orr is the best choice for Oregon State Representative District 32.

John has successfully worked and lived in the district for many years. He understands the hopes and needs of all of us living in a coastal environment. He is not held hostage by any big donors and will work for us all.

If you care about our environment, health care, education, and emergency preparedness, vote for John Orr. He is the right choice.

**Les and Myrna Wierson**  
Cannon Beach

### County manager should do his job

I have been a government employee most of my life since I was 17 years old; United States Army, city, county and state official for over 30 years in Clatsop County.

I'm not sure what's going on in the county government but I can say this, the county manager is in charge of managing county affairs, such as county employees and all functions of the county and is answerable to the elected

official, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. Just to make a statement, “I'm not attending a commission meeting because of some hostilities” is grounds for termination.

From where I stand the only persons in a hostile environment is Lianne Thompson and her counterpart. Meeting closed!

What kind of government are you running when a rebuttal is not permitted? Don't we voters have a right to hear both sides?

**Jim Brien**  
Seaside

### Participate in the process

Primary Election day this year is May 15, and I hope you vote. If you already have voted, thank you.

Your voice matters, now and every day, but voting is how you choose which candidate you want to be accountable to you. Your command is indirect and part of the whole electorate, but you are still the boss. That doesn't mean you get to control every word or every vote of your elected representative, but you are part of the group that's in charge.

Voting is one way to make this a better, more effectively-run county. It's not the only way, but it's an essential element to begin the process of working together for making this a better place.

I wish I could quote the wisdom of everyone who's been talking to me about their hopes, dreams, and concerns as I listen to them on their doorsteps. They spoke thoughtful, eloquent, wise words. The honor and privilege of representing all of you during the last three years nourishes and inspires me as I do my best to put what you want into action.

The complicated part is finding a way to integrate diverse and contradictory points of view. Believe it or not, not everyone thinks exactly the

way you do. They even want me to do things you don't want.

The best way would be to gather us together, listen well and openly to each other, develop common ground, and go forward together in concert. You know, in concert: making sweet and harmonious music, not banging each other over the head with our instruments because we disagree.

If you've read the newspapers lately, you may have noticed a lack of harmony up in Astoria. You'd be right about that. Sometimes it's necessary to talk about what's not working before we can agree on how to do what works better. I hope we can honor each other for trying to do well, even when we fall short.

When our elected leaders disagree, it makes headlines. When we're working together, it doesn't. Even so, I hope the headlines indicate that we're heading toward a better way of governing. I hope that we're moving toward a more inclusive, respectful, and accountable way of using your tax dollars to provide the services you want and need.

Your tax dollars provide the wherewithal for county services. That puts you at the top of the organizational chart, makes you the boss. You hold your elected commissioners accountable by voting us into or out of office. It's our job to hold the County Manager accountable for achieving results, the services for you and everyone else.

Elections happen every once in a while. Accountability should happen every day, and I'd like the County Board of Commissioners to check in with you more often and more directly about what you'd like to see happen that would make this a better county. Together, going forward, let's do that. Stay tuned for more details as we ask you to help us help you.

**Lianne Thompson**  
Arch Cape

*Sou'Wester Garden Club*

## plant sale

**Saturday, May 26**  
9am-Noon  
Seaside Convention Center

Wide Variety of Plants & Planters

Raffle and Silent Auction

## LEWIS & CLARK TIMBERLANDS

### Recreational Access Permit Public Notice

All recreational activities on Lewis & Clark Timberlands Oregon will require a no fee recreational permit effective June 1, 2018

MANAGED BY  
**GREENWOOD RESOURCES**

To acquire a permit (available 5/21/18): Go online to [greenwoodresources.com](http://greenwoodresources.com) and click on Recreation Access, or Scan the QR code using your smartphone at one of our access gate signs. Call 503.755.6655 for recorded information.

Our goal is to provide a quality recreational experience while improving communications with our timberland visitors.

## Join us for a free Christian Science Talk on Harmony and Healing

Discover how you can experience them in your life “*The law of harmony and Christian Science healing*” by **Josh Niles, CSB**, a Christian Science Teacher and Healer

**Saturday, May 12th at 2pm**  
Astoria Public Library  
Flag Room  
450 10th Steet, Astoria

*Sponsored by the Christian Science Churches:  
Gearhart | 503-738-0200  
Astoria | 503-325-5719*