

Veterans service officer focuses on community

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop Community Action has a new veterans service officer.

Josh Davis, a U.S. Army veteran and former veterans service officer for Multnomah County, has been on the job since early June. He replaces Stephen Bobian, a U.S. Coast Guard veteran, who was hired last year after Clatsop County shifted the contract for the position from Luke Thomas, a Coast Guard veteran, to Clatsop Community Action.

The nonprofit operates the regional food bank and provides housing, energy assistance and other critical services to low-income people. The goal was to expand outreach to the county's more than 3,600 veterans and help make the agency's social services more accessible.

Davis said his goal is to teach caseworkers at the agency about his role so they know to refer veterans who may be eligible for benefits. He said that while his role is to help veterans obtain benefits, that is only part of the job. He wants to help create a more supportive community for veterans.

"And the VA (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), as innovative as it tries to be, it's still the VA and it's clinical," Davis said. "And it's sterile and there's



Viviana Mathews

Josh Davis is the county's new veterans service officer.

not as much warmth there. So a lot of what we are seeing in the community is veterans are not, and their families are not, engaging in VA services. It's not that there's a lack of services. The services are there, but they're not engaging and they're not engaging in these services for a reason.

"As much as they have tried to augment different types of things, the framework is still there. They have not changed the framework and they've not changed the culture enough

to really, truly serve veterans and particularly vulnerable veterans."

Davis, who grew up in Columbia County and was deployed three times, said the North Coast is where he convalesced after returning from Iraq in 2005.

He began working as an advocate for veterans about eight years ago while he was attending Lower Columbia College in Longview, Washington.

"I knew that I wanted to do something that had to do with community building or

community development or care, but I didn't know what yet," Davis said. "And so I was working on my transfer degree and I was always at the veterans information window at the registrar's office and there was always some kind of problem, like my pay was wrong or it was late or I got dropped from a class because the university didn't receive payment from the VA, but they know that it's coming. And there was always constantly an issue."

Other veterans were having similar problems, and Davis found that part of the problem was that the information counter was short-staffed.

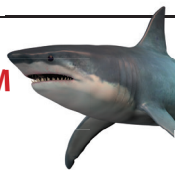
He began working at the information counter. He learned the system and helped create a framework to make it easier for veterans to get the information they needed. Over the next couple of years, he took on more responsibility and became president of the student veterans club.

While receiving his degree in social work from Portland State University, Davis began working with veterans in Multnomah County and then became the county's veterans service officer.

"All of a sudden ... the fire started burning, and I was like, 'OK, this is what I'm supposed to do,'" Davis said. "I'm supposed to build communities and be with veterans."

Aquarium News: Meet the deep-diving salp

SEASIDE AQUARIUM
TIFFANY BOOTHE



Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

This species of salp can grow to 1.5 inches in length. They are easily identified by their orange, hard-cut sack.

Walking along the shoreline you might come across some of these guys. They are a species of salp called *Salpa fusiformis*.

This species of salp can grow to 1.5 inches in length. They are easily identified by their orange, hard-cut sack. They often undergo daily vertical migrations coming up to the surface at night and diving down to over 1,600 feet during the day. While *Salpa fusiformis* is typically found offshore, occasional near-shore swarms do occur (like right now).

When conditions are just right populations of slaps may form massive swarms of millions of individuals. They are eaten by heteropods, medusae, siphonophores, ctenophores, sea tur-

tles, marine birds and over 50 different species of fish.

What is a salp?

In order to understand the salp you must first understand the tunicate. Tunicates

belong to the same phylum as vertebrates.

Though as adults they do not have a backbone, developing larvae possess a tail, a dorsal nerve cord, and a dorsal stiffening structure (not composed of bone) called the notochord; because of this tunicates are thought to be more closely related to vertebrates such as fish and people.

A salp is a pelagic tunicate. Meaning they are tunicates that drift in the mid-water of the ocean. They move by means of jet propulsion, and feeding is accomplished by pumping plankton-laden water through the body where a mucous net is used to extract food particles. They can be found individually or in large aggregations consisting of millions of individuals.



Windermere Real Estate 37th Annual Community Service Day

Brokers from Windermere Realty Trust's Gearhart office volunteered at Camp Kiwanilong where they helped with projects around the camp.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prom Centennial Chalk Art Contest

In celebration of the Prom Centennial, the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District is hosting a chalk art contest on the Seaside Promenade. The event is open to artists of all ages and skill levels.

Portland artists Bev Cordova and May Wallace will be offering a class in chalk art on Friday, July 30, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Sunset Recreation Center, providing contestants with a chance to learn how to create chalk art using pastels.

On Saturday, July 31, artists will create art on the Seaside Promenade near the Turnaround starting at 9 a.m., with judging and an awards ceremony with prizes that afternoon.

The entrance fee for the class and contest is \$25 and includes a set of pastels and other supplies to create chalk art on the Prom. Call 503-

738-3311 to register.

A portion of this project was made possible through a grant from the Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, funded by room tax dollars. This event has also been funded by a grant from the Juan Young Trust.

There is also a need for volunteers for this event. Email Melissa Ousley at mousley@sunsetempire.com.

Strategic planning workshops scheduled at rec center

The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District has hired consultants to assist with strategic planning for the Sunset Recreation Center and has invited key stakeholders and business leaders in the community to provide feedback during this process. Sports Facilities Advisory

Partner and Strategic Advisor Evan Eleff and Project Manager Suzanne Fisher Reeder will conduct a site visit July 14 and July 15 to establish a clear vision and key objectives for the project; review and analyze the market; determine next steps in the project; set up project accuracy and success.

The visit will also include an open house and community meeting which are open to the public. Meetings will be held at the Sunset Recreation Center on July 14 from 6 to 7 p.m. and on July 15 from 5 to 6 p.m. For more information visit sunsetempire.com.

Local students are named to Oregon State University honor roll

Local students are among the 7,255 Oregon State University students to make the

spring scholastic honor roll.

In Arch Cape, Brendan D. Deur, a junior with a major in university exploratory studies, and in Cannon Beach, Annuka A. Brown, a senior with a major in human development and family science, and Chance M. Giguiere, a sophomore majoring in computer science, made the honor roll.

Gearhart's Peyton J. Sims, a freshman majoring in sociology, and Hunter L. Thompson, a senior majoring in forest engineering, were named to the honor roll.

In Seaside, honorees include Parker R. Conrad, a junior majoring in computer science; Darren E. Garnett, a sophomore with a major in general engineering; Andrea B. Harris, a junior, majoring in human development and family science; Heather S. Hirsch, a senior majoring in microbiology; and Gage E. Mergel, a sophomore majoring in music studies.

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