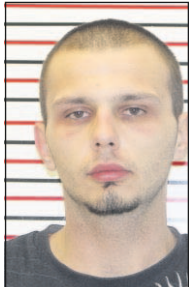


# Man who tried to escape jail gets over 6 years

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

Kevin Michael Burnham, the Seaside man who tried escaping from Clatsop County Jail while in custody for an attempted murder charge from a hammer attack, was sentenced Friday to more than six years in prison.



Kevin Michael Burnham

Burnham, 26, appeared in Clatsop County Circuit Court Friday to accept his sentence.

He pleaded guilty last month to a lesser charge of second-degree robbery for the hammer attack and to first-degree attempted escape for the jail incident. He also pleaded guilty to unlawful possession of methamphetamine from a previous case.

Other charges, including attempted murder, were dropped through the plea agreement.

Burnham was arrested in Seaside in February with Joshua Lee Fitch, 24.

Seaside Police responded to Providence Seaside Hospital after receiving a report of a man who had suffered a serious head injury. The man reported being assaulted with hammers by two other men, later identified as Burnham and Fitch.

Fitch was sentenced earlier this month to more than five years in prison.

"There was really no rational reason to beat up (the victim)," Prosecutor Dawn Buzzard said. "He didn't steal from them or anything."

While in custody, Burnham and another inmate, Anthony Craig Osborne, attempted to escape from the county jail. The two inmates broke off a shower drain grate, tied it to a bedsheet and swung it against a window about 20 times

until the window shattered. A couple of more swings and they could have broken through the window, which is large enough for them to get through.

"They took a steel drain, attached it to a bed sheet and started waling on the window and they did knock some of the glass out," Buzzard said.

The two men also flooded a toilet in the cellblock and added soap to make the floor slippery for responding corrections officers.

Their plan failed when corrections officers heard the grate hitting the window. The officers detained the inmates and placed them in a more secure part of the jail.

The estimated damage could cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to fix, according to the jail.

Buzzard requested 90 days to determine the amount of restitution for the damage.

Osborne, 24, was in custody on theft, burglary and drug charges. He is scheduled for a final resolution conference in December.

Burnham's defense attorney Rock Pizzo and the prosecution were negotiating a plea agreement in the attempted murder case before the attempted escape.

The reason he tried to escape was because the District Attorney's Office gave him such a bad deal. However, he accepted that deal by pleading guilty to second-degree robbery.

"In the end Mr. Burnham has discovered, through the angst of these past six months, that however it went down at some point he has lost his soul to drugs and he wants to spend this time to get his soul back," Pizzo said.

# Aquatic Center reopens, but pool hours restricted

By DERRICK DEPLEDGE  
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Aquatic Center reopened today after a six-figure restoration, but the pools will be closed during afternoons because of a lack of certified lifeguards.

The city invested \$250,000 in capital improvement fund money to replaster pools, improve showers and make other upgrades and repairs. The city described the improvements as the most extensive since the aquatic center opened in 1998. The work was done during the annual maintenance closure in September.

While the aquatic center reopened as scheduled this morning, Parks and Recreation staff have decided to restrict afternoon hours to the pools because of a lack of lifeguards.

The pools will be closed from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The fitness center will still be open.

"We've had a good amount of staff leave over the last month for better paying jobs," said Angela Cosby, the director of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. "So we're struggling."

The city said it has been increasingly difficult to find and train certified lifeguards who will work for minimum wage.

A lifeguard training course will be held Friday through Sunday in the hopes of finding additional lifeguards.

Cosby said the restricted pool hours will likely be in place for at least a month, or until the city can find and train enough lifeguards to restore hours.

# Transient man found dead near Astoria Riverwalk

The Daily Astorian

A 48-year-old transient man was found dead Friday morning in an alcove of an old property near Eighth Street off the Astoria Riverwalk.

Astoria Police said the man died of natural causes. There were no signs of foul play.

Cliffon Scott Bruton was discovered about 8 a.m. by another person he was camping with. The Clatsop County Medical Examiner assisted police at the scene.

# A craft beer weekend



Smokey Brights, a band from Seattle, Washington, performs at the Pacific Northwest Brew Cup Saturday night. Bands from all over the Pacific Northwest, and even Nebraska, entertained the crowd all weekend long.



Visitors attend Brew Cup Saturday night.



Visitors enjoy hula hoops at the Pacific Northwest Brew Cup Saturday night. The Brew Cup featured over 36 different beers and ciders.

Photos by  
Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

# County purchases ballot-counting machine

The Daily Astorian

A new ballot-counting machine was recently delivered to the Clatsop County Clerk and Elections Division for more efficient vote tallying in elections.

The \$110,135 machine, called a DS850, was approved for purchase by the Board of Commissioners in July.

Elections Division staff received training on the new machine on Tuesday.

The new machine's first use will come during the Nov. 3 special election fea-

turing a local option tax measure for the Seaside School District.

The former ballot-counting, in use since 2005, used outdated technology for capturing data that is no longer available and had reached the end of its service life, according to the county.

The old machine used an optical scanner to tabulate ballots, and frequently jammed on folded or damaged ballots.

The new machine uses a high-speed digital scanner that can process 300 ballots

per minute with virtually no jamming. The model is used by numerous elections offices across the country.

Introduction of the new machine will not change the look of ballots or the method of voting.

Ballots for the Nov. 3 election will mailed out to eligible voters in the Seaside School District the week of Oct. 19. The deadline to register to vote in the election is Oct. 13.

The new machine arrives at a time when the county is focused on avoiding ballot

errors, which were found in the primary and general elections last year.

Last year's primary ballot had a mistake in the Board of Commissioners' District 5 race. Two errors were found on the general election ballot last fall for a Clatsop Community College bond measure and a Cannon Beach City Council race.

As a result of the general election errors, the Oregon Secretary of State's Office required the county to distribute supplemental ballots, costing about \$14,000.

# Judge Nelson returns to bench after heart attack

The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Philip Nelson returned to the bench last week after suffering a heart attack in July.

Temporary judges presided during Nelson's two-month absence.

The Office of the State Court Administrator is able to pull from a pool of retired judges across the state through a Judge Member Program. Judges are able to retire early if they agree



Judge Philip Nelson

to give a certain number of days each year on assignment wherever they are needed.

Nelson became a circuit court judge in 1992, and is the longest serving elected offi-

cial in Clatsop County. He is up for re-election next year.

He is one of three circuit

court judges in Clatsop County along with Paula Brownhill and Cindee Matyas.

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