

Astoria Flying Club taking off

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The environment is beautiful, space is abundant and there are planes to fly, and airplane mechanic Dave West and other aviators wonder why more people aren't taking advantage of the Astoria Regional Airport.

They and other aviators in the area are in the beginning stages of starting the Astoria Flying Club, which holds its first meeting 10 a.m. Saturday in the conference room at Lum's Auto Center, located at 1605 S.E. Ensign Lane in Warrenton.

The club, which is forming as a nonprofit, promises to provide a place for learning how to fly and renting planes. West sees interest from U.S. Coast Guardsmen, former aviators looking to get back in the cockpit.

"You get interested in it. You start bringing other people in, you know; it starts snowballing into a bigger thing," said West, part of a local aviation community of 25 to 30 and owner of West Aviation, his airplane mechanic business. "We're trying to promote the airport. We want more activity going on out here. It's a great airport."

Allen Sprague, the primary flight instructor in the group and owner of Aviation Adventures, said the initial meeting of the club is to



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Airplane mechanic and pilot Dave West pulls out a Cessna 177 Cardinal, one of the planes the Astoria Flying Club hopes to rent out to pilots.

gauge interest and determine how much membership fees and club dues should be. The group needs a \$20,000 buy-in overall by members to start up, said Sprague, which will be less when more people come to the meeting. People can still join the club at any point after the meeting, although Sprague said the cost of

joining might be more per person after startup.

Planes available

Those who want to fly don't need a plane. There are plenty at the airport that owners want flown. The club has available for loans or a flight-training a Cessna 172 Sky-

hawk, a Cessna 177 Cardinal and a Piper PA-38-112 Tomahawk, with more coming onboard.

Flight training at Hillsboro Airport, said West, can cost \$130 an hour to rent a plane, and possibly another \$70 each hour for an instructor.

"Here's the biggest difference of a club versus a flight school," said

MORE INFORMATION

If interested in the Astoria Flying Club, call 503-298-7284, email AstoriaFlyingClub@hotmail.com or visit the club's Facebook page.

Sprague. "In a flight school, you're going to pay probably close to \$200 an hour for that Cardinal. In the club, you're probably going to be closer to \$100 an hour. The same airplane, with the fuel and oil and everything else included, half the price."

Pilots can rent out planes for multiple days, said Sprague, paying two-to-four hours a day minimum.

Sprague said club rates for instruction will also be \$30 to \$35 an hour, half as much as what West said schools in Hillsboro can charge.

One of the biggest costs for the club is insurance on all three planes, costing \$8,000 to \$9,000 a year, with the Cessna 172 and the Tomahawk as the primary instructional planes.

"My airplane's the one that crashed in Gearhart," said Sprague, who's rented Cessna was crashed by Jason Ketcheson in 2009 into a house, killing himself and four others. "So I've gone through the whole scenario of being a plane owner and having it go down with somebody else flying it and knowing what kind of coverage you need."

Maritime history course begins Tuesday

The Columbia River Maritime Museum, 1792 Marine Drive, continues "Past to Present: Columbia River Maritime History," an eight-week lecture series with guest speakers each week, offered from 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays in February in the Kern Room at the museum. The lectures are free for museum members, \$5 fee for nonmembers.

The scheduled lectures are as follows:

- Feb. 3: "Weather Hazards of the Pacific Northwest," presented by Tyree Wilde of the National Weather Service.
- Feb. 10: "Fishing Vessels of the Pacific Northwest," presented by James Cole, author and naval architect.
- Feb. 17: "Beeswax Wreck Project,"

presented by: Scott Williams, principal investigator, Beeswax Wreck Project.

- Feb. 24: "Helicopter Pilot for the Columbia River Bar Pilots," presented by Capt. Bruce Jones, U.S. Coast Guard (retired).

For information, contact Scott Thiele, education director, at 503-325-2323 or thiele@crmm.org

Knappa auction donations sought

Donations for the 18th annual Knappa Schools Foundation dinner and auction need to be in by Feb. 6.

Volunteers at the event, which raised \$70,000 last year for school programs and scholarships, are contacting people to see how they might be able to contribute. Donations such as gift certificates, cash, pur-

chased items and antiques are all acceptable.

Donations can be picked up by volunteers or dropped off at Knappa High School, located at 41535 Old U.S. Highway 30. For further information or to request donation pick-up, call Tanya Olds-Lempea at 503-741-0385 or email knappaschoolsfoundation@gmail.com

On the Record

Theft

• At 12:24 p.m. Jan. 14, Warrenton Police cited and released Jill Storey, 61, Warrenton, for third-degree theft after she attempted to steal a \$99.99 dietary supplement from Costco. Storey was seen by Costco staff placing contents of the supplement into her purse. She was contacted outside and admitted to taking the supplement without paying. The supplement, Sero Vital, could not be resold, because Storey opened the pack-

Crash

• At 2:16 p.m. Tuesday, Oregon State Police responded to a two-vehicle crash at U.S. Highway 101 and Perkins Lane in Warrenton. A Nissan Altima, driven by Tarlok Mann, 53, Longview, Wash., was northbound on Highway 101 searching for a place to turn to change direction southbound. Mann said did not see a Chevrolet C35, driven by Rhan Thomas Smith, 32, Seaside, and turned into it resulting in the crash. Smith was transported by Medix Ambulance Service to

Providence Seaside Hospital.

Fishing violation

• At 2:29 p.m. Sunday, Oregon State Police cited two men for angling for steelhead but failing to have 2015 angling licenses or combined harvest cards at the Lewis and Clark River fish ladder.

Daniel C. Lunsford, 25, Astoria, was cited for no combined angling harvest card and angling within 200 feet of fishway. Kenneth J. Williams, 25, Astoria, was cited for no combined angling harvest card and illegal possession of non-adipose fin-clipped steelhead.

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