



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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A promise of perpetual care



Leaves and branches cover gravesites at the Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton Jan. 26. The last full-time worker at the cemetery was cut in 2013 for budget reasons.

Ocean View Cemetery upkeep a casualty of the recession

By DERRICK DePLEDGE The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Steve Jurgensen and his wife, Dottie, were out at Ocean View Cemetery Friday afternoon with a lawn mower and weed trimmer, carefully tending to their son, Charlie’s, gravesite. When the couple purchased the plot from Astoria after their son died at 24 in 2006, the cemetery was in much better condition. But budget cuts caused the city’s Parks and Recreation Department to eliminate staff and scale back upkeep. While the city’s finances have recovered with the economy, the cemetery remains a left-over stain of the recession. “The last couple of years the weeds — when the grass finally stops dying — the dandelions are like really tall,” said Jurgensen, a retired electrician who lives in Astoria. “The moss is ridiculous. It’s taking over.” The city not only has a moral obligation to maintain Ocean View; it has a contractual one. People pay \$1,660 on average for the burial and perpetual care of their loved ones. Persistent complaints about the cemetery’s appearance have been heard at City Hall. City Councilor Russ Warr, who owns Astoria Granite Works, which makes grave markers, insisted that improved maintenance at Ocean View be included in the city’s goals for the coming fiscal year.

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Leaves cover a cracked grave marker at the Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton Jan. 26.



Leaves and branches cover gravesites at the Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton Jan. 26. Ocean View is mowed twice a month during the spring and summer. JOSHUA BESSEX The Daily Astorian

THE VOTE THAT KILLED

State Rep. Betsy Johnson was Dems’ dissenting vote in 2014

By PETER WONG EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group

SALEM — Democrats in the Oregon Legislature wasted no time Monday in using their larger majorities to advance three issues that died by a single vote in the past two years. Legislative committees took up bills on the first day of the 2015 session that Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum, D-Portland, described as “unfinished business” from the previous two-year cycle. They were: Automatic voter registration for people 18 and older, unless they choose to opt out, when they obtain or renew driver’s licenses. The House Rules Committee heard House Bill 2177, which unlike 2013,

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Oscar B soon to be underway

Westport ferry closes for a week to ready for new boat

By KYLE SPURR The Daily Astorian

WESTPORT — The ferry landings on each side of the lower Columbia River are closed this week as crews prepare for the arrival of a brand new ferry later this month. The Ferry Wahkiakum, serviced by Wahkiakum County since 1962, is being replaced Feb. 27, with a larger ferry that is being constructed on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle. The new \$5.7 million ferry will be named the Oscar B after former skipper and owner Oscar Bergseng. It is the last ferry operating on the lower Columbia River. In preparation of the new ferry’s arrival, Legacy Contracting Inc. of Salem is busy upgrading the ferry landings in Westport and Puget Island. Construction work started first on the Oregon side of the river, where crews are replacing the

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Hop, skip, jump honors jump-rope advocate

Good for the heart, soul: Kids turn jumping rope into charity

By EDWARD STRATTON The Daily Astorian

In 1981, physical education instructor Karen Larson brought Jump Rope for Heart to John Jacob Astor Elementary School. She kept it going until cancer took her vision and forced her into retirement in 1999. “She was my PE teacher,” said current Astor PE teacher Brian Babbitt to the gathered kids during a Tsunami Skippers jump-rope team exhibition and the

kickoff of the 2015 fundraiser Wednesday in Astor’s main gym. Babbitt brought the event back in 2010 after a hiatus. “She was very passionate about jumping rope,” said Babbitt, one of many PE teachers nationwide who organize Jump Rope for Heart at their respective schools. “She did some jump-roping events here at Astor School, and we’re just going to continue to do it in her memory. It’s part of our tradition.”

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Submitted photo Physical education teacher Karen Larson from Astor Elementary accepted an award in 1987 from the American Heart Association’s Oregon affiliate for her school’s students raising the most per capita. The 175 students at Astor that year raised \$6,461, or \$36.92 per pupil.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian Emma Meyer and Annika Wunderlich, members of the Tsunami Skippers, perform while jumping double Dutch during a Jump Rope for Heart assembly at John Jacob Astor Elementary Wednesday. Turning the ropes are coach Stacey Dundas, right, and co-coach Viola Soprano, left.

