



**Paul Gillum, left, a Clatsop Community College Board member and U.S. Marines veteran from the Vietnam War, helped open CCC's new Veteran's Center Wednesday. One veteran he helped go back to school was his son James, a U.S. Army Iraqi war veteran now studying fire science at CCC.**

EDWARD STRATTON — The Daily Astorian

## A space for veterans becoming civilians

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop Community College, repeatedly named a military-friendly school by various publications, has averaged 480 veteran students a year over the past decade. And according to local veteran liaisons, the stream doesn't appear to be drying up anytime soon.

On Wednesday, the college opened a Veteran's Center in the former Student Services Building at 1717 Lexington Ave. to help those returning vets transition into school and work.

"I get five to 20 phone calls a day, and that's just phone calls," said Luke Thomas, a 26-year U.S. Coast Guard veteran hired by the county to liaison with his recently civilianized peers. "Just standing out here in the room, I've met five who want to see me."

Thomas said there are still veterans coming back each week from Iraq and Afghanistan. Most just want to decompress before looking for school or work. It's his job to go to places where they congregate, find them and provide support in their transition to civilian life.

Thomas takes appointments by phone to meet with veterans. For anyone needing assistance, he says to call him at 503-791-9983 and state their name, the last four digits of their social security number, multiple ways to contact them and what their needs are. Within a week, he sets appointments to meet them, either at the college or at Seaside Public Library.

The veterans center helps in that effort, with links to liaisons like Thomas and Patrick Preston, a local veteran employment representative.

"The whole goal is to identify and implement services for veterans," said Preston, adding that the college is trying to get a mental health



**Donna Larson, vice president of academic and student affairs at Clatsop Community College and a U.S. Air Force Reserve veteran, speaks with Luke Thomas, a 26-year veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard who will provide advising at CCC's new Veteran's Center.**

Courtesy of Clatsop Community College

counselor stationed there as well.

During a Veterans Day ceremony in November, Preston awarded Donna Larson, vice president of academic and student affairs and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force Reserve who served as a hospital administrator, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Performance Incentive Award. The award came from the college's hosting the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP), a mandatory, several-day training event for outgoing service members and spouses. CCC became the first college in the U.S. to offer transferable credit to about 40 veterans taking the class.

In addition to counseling and advising, said Preston, the center will offer things as simple as clothes for interviews and furniture, anything to help returning veterans be successful.

### Proud to serve

For the longest time, said CCC Board member Paul Gillum, he didn't want people to know that he was a veteran from the U.S. Marine Corps who fought in the Vietnam War.

"Quite frankly, it was the public," said Gillum. "When we came back, we were despised."

But fellow veteran and police officer James Ranking, said Gillum, invited him to take part in Warrenton's 4th of July parade and helped him come out of his shell. Gillum was attending CCC at the time.

"Everything you've done in the military, it matters,"

said Gillum, adding that the military experience helped prepare him for 35 years in the Astoria Police Department.

Gillum comes from a military family, including a brother, cousins and a father-in-law. He helped his son James, an Iraqi war veteran from the U.S. Army, re-enter CCC. Now he's studying to put his truck-driving skills form the military toward a career in firefighting.

"A lot of the process I didn't understand," said James Gillum, who'd earned credits at CCC while at Astoria High School and had trained as a fire cadet. "I just talked to veterans services, and they brought me through."

## Fire breaks out at Gearhart condos

GEARHART — At about 9:30 p.m. Thursday, the Gearhart Fire Department received an alarm for a fire at the Pacific View condominiums, part of the Gearhart by the Sea Resort complex, at 1238 N. Marion Avenue across from McMenamins. There was smoke coming from unit 481, an unoccupied room, and the heat detectors triggered the alarm system.

The cause of a fire is under investigation, but it does not seem suspicious, said Gearhart Fire Chief Bill Eddy.

Seaside Fire & Rescue and Medix Ambulance Service were called in.

The building was evacuated, and the fire caused no injuries.

"Because of the size of the building and the type of the building, I went ahead and called a second alarm," Eddy said.

In addition to Seaside and Gearhart fire departments, the Warrenton Fire Department and Cannon Beach Fire & Rescue were dispatched.

It did not take long to put out the fire, Eddy said. Residents were allowed back in their rooms about 11 p.m.

"I don't see anything suspicious with the fire," Eddy said, but the incident is under investigation.

## AHS graduates get boost Monday

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Astoria resident Kim Raichl read a Jan. 30 article in The Daily Astorian about the 68.7 percent graduation rate in Oregon, the lowest in the nation, and Astoria High School's 68.1 percent rate. Raichl wondered what she could do to help incentivize graduation and invest their success. She reached out to businesses, and ultimately Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear.

On March 2, LaMear proclaimed the start of spring break Monday the first Astoria High Graduate Day, with the intent of making it an annual event.

"The Astoria High School 'Safe Senior Graduation Party' Committee believes as a community we can help

our high school by creating a community-supported day dedicated to the students who persevere and work hard to receive their diplomas," LaMear said in her proclamation.

About 20 local businesses have pledged 5 percent of their sales Monday to the Safe Senior Graduation Party. A full list of businesses is available on the Astoria High Graduate Facebook page. Each business will have a sign in their window notifying customers they support graduating seniors.

Students from the AHS choir will perform at 1 p.m. Monday in front of the Liberty Theater.

For more information, find Astoria High Graduate Day on Facebook or at <http://bit.ly/1HbwzTg>

## Public can observe lifeguard training Sunday

The Astoria Aquatic Center is holding its bi-monthly lifeguard training and open house from 5 to 7 p.m. Sunday. This is an opportunity to view the types of training and preparation Aquatic Center lifeguards perform to keep everyone who uses the center safe. For those who are interested in joining the team, this

is an excellent time to come and see what lifeguards do, organizers said.

There will be no swimming during this time of training. Spectators will be seated in the bleachers on the pool deck while training takes place. The public is welcome to come and get an insight into the facility's emergency plans.

For online updates: [www.dailyastorian.com](http://www.dailyastorian.com)

**DEL'S O.K. TIRE FACTORY**  
YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR TIRES  
• CUSTOM WHEELS •  
• AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES •  
Hours: Mon-Fri 8-6 Sat- 8-4  
503-325-2861 For emergencies 503-325-0233  
35359 Business Hwy 101 (miles crossing) Astoria, OR

**WANTED**  
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber  
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA  
Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500

**CONCEAL CARRY PERMIT CLASS**  
Oregon - Utah - Valid 34 States  
March 24th 1pm or 6pm  
Best Western: 555 Hamburg Ave, Astoria  
OR/Utah—valid in WA \$80 or Oregon only \$45  
[www.FirearmTrainingNW.com](http://www.FirearmTrainingNW.com) | [FirearmTrainingNW@gmail.com](mailto:FirearmTrainingNW@gmail.com)  
360-921-2071

**VOLUNTEER PICK OF THE WEEK**  
**Bailey**  
A rather special kitty — Bailey, a dark tortoiseshell. Cat whisperer needed to unlock the mystery and marvel that is Bodacious Bailey.  
Sponsored by Bayshore Animal Hospital  
CLATSOP COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER  
1315 SE 19th St., Warrenton • 861- PETS  
[www.dogsncats.org](http://www.dogsncats.org) Noon to 4pm, Tues-Sat

**Thank You**  
to all the local businesses and the community for the Denise Stiner Fundraiser. The turnout was great and your support for this event made it a huge success  
Thanks so much!  
**Seaside Golf Club**  
451 Ave U, Seaside • 503-738-5261  
[www.seasidegolfcourse.us](http://www.seasidegolfcourse.us)

**NOW OPEN 24/7**  
**SUPER MART**  
280 S. Main • Warrenton  
BEST PRICES on beer & cigarettes in Clatsop County  
Hot Deli  
BREAKFAST Biscuits & Gravy • Breakfast Burrito  
\$4.99 +dep. pepsi products 12-PACKS  
Sandwich, Burrito or Pizza Slice \$1.99 Ea.  
Bait: Blue & Green Herring \$6.99/tray Get your FISHING LICENSES here!  
\$54.99/carton Marlboro  
\$49.99/carton Camel  
\$52.99/pack Camel  
\$44.99/carton PALE MALE  
\$5.69/pack Marlboro  
\$47.99/carton Marlboro  
\$4.79/can  
\$5.79/can  
\$4.59/can  
Hot Deal **BUSCH** -OR- **KEYSTONE**  
6-PACK 18-PACK  
16oz. cans 16oz. cans  
\$5.69 +dep. \$12.99 +dep.  
NOW ACCEPTING OREGON TRAIL CARD