



Submitted photo

On his trip to China and Xi'an No. 85 Middle School, Astoria High School Principal Lynn Jackson said he witnessed highly dedicated students in an unparalleled high-stakes testing environment.

## China: As part of the exchange, eight Chinese principals will visit the US

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### Under pressure

"The pressure of that summative test ... drives all instruction at the high school," Jackson said, relaying his observations of placards at the front of class with a gaokao countdowns and students leaving school late at night after studying.

He said he might have had a skewed perspective, No. 85 being a high-level school where many parents are professionals and many children study at internationally prestigious universities — akin to using Jesuit High School, a private Catholic high school in Portland, to look at Oregon's educational system. During his trip to Xi'an,

Jackson sat down several times with students, who conveyed the pressures they face to make it to class under any circumstance and study harder than other students.

"One student said 'we don't have dreams,'" Jackson said, adding an administrator told him about the problem in universities, where students who have managed to pass the gaokao often lack direction.

The teachers aren't pushy or overly demanding, Jackson said students told him, but rather, it's more of a societal issue.

"There's a human element to this," he said, conveying the immense pride and emotion felt by students and parents during a coming-of-age ceremony he

compared to graduation day in the U.S.

In a country of 1.3 billion, Jackson said a principal queried him, how can educators equitably find the cream of the crop without testing?

### Best of both worlds

The New York Times article reported how Chinese schools are trying, albeit with resistance, to lower the reliance on the gaokao and expand curriculum.

Jackson said he sees a middle ground between the discipline of China's schools and students, and the creativity of America's.

Along with Xi'an No. 85, Jackson visited several universities and a Juilliard-like arts school, the Shaanxi Vocational

College of Arts.

Along with shadowing educators at various schools, he visited ancient monuments around Xi'an and the Shaanxi province, including the Terracotta Army, the Shaanxi History Museum, the Xi'an Bell Tower in the center of the city and the Qianling Mausoleum. Jackson also visited the Great Wall of China, Beijing, the Forbidden City and other national monuments. The China Exchange Initiative covered much of the cost, and Jackson paid for his airfare.

As part of the Oregon-Shaanxi exchange, eight Chinese principals will travel to the U.S. later this year. Jackson said Principal Wu from Xi'an No. 85 will be among the group.



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Principal Lynn Jackson said that amid high-stakes testing, he was consistently reminded of the humanity of Chinese students, seen here learning about the Astoria Column. Jackson also brought gliders from Astoria.

## Letter: Judge is expected to rule on defense's request at next hearing

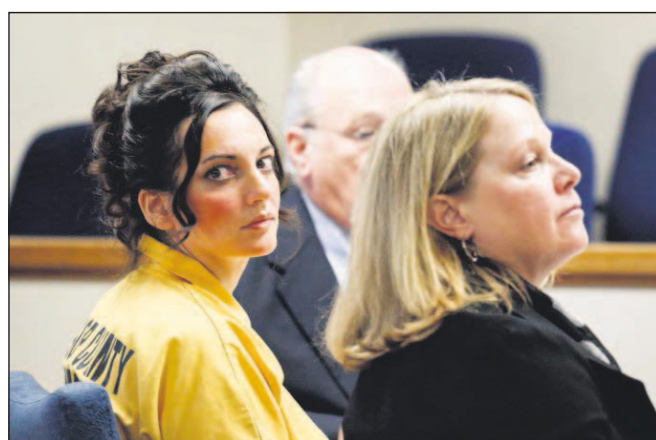
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Marquis' letter asked the court to set a firm deadline of May 1 for providing witness names and statements and that an upcoming hearing May 12 be turned into a status hearing to determine when the state can expect to receive discovery from the defense.

Smith, 41, is accused of aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder for allegedly drugging and murdering her 2-year-old daughter and attempting to kill her 13-year-old daughter in a Cannon Beach hotel July 31.

In the motion filed Monday, Smith's defense claimed Marquis' letter is an improper pleading and in violation of Oregon Uniform Trial Court Rules.

The defense is asking the court to strike the letter from the court files and to have Marquis cease such filings, the motion stated.



Daily Astorian file

Jessica Smith, appears with her attorneys William Falls, back, and Lynne Morgan, foreground at the Clatsop County Courthouse for a status hearing Jan. 22. Smith is charged with aggravated murder and attempted aggravated murder in the drowning death of her 2-year-old and cutting the throat of her teenage daughter in Cannon Beach.

"The District Attorney's letter to the court and to defense counsel serves no purpose other than the harassment of Ms. Smith and her counsel," Falls and Morgan wrote. "The District Attorney's intent to

publicly disparage Ms. Smith and her counsel by filing such letter as a trial pleading is obvious and such tactics only serve to deny to Ms. Smith the constitutional rights of a fair, unprejudiced trial with jurors

who have not been inundated with unnecessary and negative publicity."

In addition, the defense's motion stated Marquis' complaints have been brought up multiple times in previous court cases and to continually raise the same issues wastes court resources and interferes with Smith's efforts to conduct the litigation in a timely manner.

"Numerous and repeated complaints by the state,

whether by letter or by properly filed pleadings, should not be condoned or allowed when they argue the same issues previously ruled upon by this court," Falls and Morgan wrote.

The motion also points out the state carries the burden of proof, not the defense.

"A criminal defendant, as I have known even before going to law school, has an absolute right not to testify and in fact, to not present any evidence or

put on any defense," Falls and Morgan wrote.

The next scheduled hearing in the case is 11:15 a.m. April 17, when Judge Matyas is expected to rule on the defense's request to strike the letter.

"I expect to address these issues at the hearing on April 17," Marquis said. "The state did not file a motion, we sent a letter to the court asking that the May 12 date be turned to a status hearing. I expect that is what we will be discussing."

## Bridge: The Riverfront Vision Plan was adopted in 2009

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But in other sections over the river in Uniontown, new buildings could be up to 35 feet high and 150 feet wide, with 40-foot corridors spaced in between to preserve views.

On shore, new buildings could be 35 feet high — or up to 45 feet with setbacks — with view corridors in between.

The Bridge Vista phase would also involve rezoning property on shore to allow for an expanded range of commercial and residential uses and a pedestrian-friendly district.

The 5-0 vote by the Planning Commission sent Bridge Vista to the Astoria City Council, which is expected to review the blueprint in May.

### Multiyear project

The Riverfront Vision Plan, adopted in 2009, is a four-phase project to better shape land use and development along the river. The first leg — the Civic Greenway phase between 16th Street and 41st Street — was approved by the City Council last year.

Bridge Vista in Uniontown was identified as a potential location for new development, including development over the river, but has become the latest flashpoint for preservationists who want little or no growth on the river.

Ted Osborn, the president of the Lower Columbia Pres-

ervation Society, questioned what lessons the Planning Commission learned from a town hall meeting in Uniontown in January where public sentiment was overwhelmingly opposed to greater development.

Matt Hastie, a city planning consultant, said public feedback from the town hall influenced the recommendation to restrict development near the bridge and west of Second Street. "We certainly heard a lot of testimony from folks who would like to see very little to nothing allowed over water," he said.

"We're implementing the Riverfront Vision Plan. We're not going back and revising the recommendations from that plan. That plan basically talks about a balance of protecting views in some areas, allowing a certain amount of overwater development in other areas, that's what we're trying to balance."

Hastie said the Bridge Vista proposal would prevent certain development over the river, such as residential units or hotels, that had provoked public concern.

Dave Pearson, the president of the Planning Commission, characterized the Bridge Vista recommendations as "a lot of compromises. But there are a lot of steps forward that we simply do not have right now.

"So, to me, this is I think

the best possible balance that we have to send to the City Council for consideration."

Commissioner Jan Mitchell said she had been very concerned about development pressures along the river before the recession stalled growth. At the time, the city did not have the kind of land use restrictions now in place along the Civic Greenway and possible in the Bridge Vista phase.

"No plan is perfect," she said, "but I think it is a huge step in the right direction and leaves this community less vulnerable to being taken over by corporations that really don't know much about how we see ourselves as a fishing village, or as a river community, or whatever."

Commission Vice President McLaren Innes and Commissioners Sean Fitzpatrick and Kent Easom joined Pearson and Mitchell in voting in favor of the recommendations. Commissioners Daryl Moore and Frank Spence were excused.

Some residents want the city to do more to discourage development along the river and will likely pressure the City Council to add further restrictions before approving the Bridge Vista segment.

"This is not a Bridge Vista plan," Juanita Price, a retired librarian, told the Planning Commission. "This is a bridge blackout plan."

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