

HOME TO STAY?

'Shanghaied' aims to stay put



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Judith Niland, volunteer coordinator with the Astor Street Opry Co., shows the ticket office, which also doubles as a storage area and is the only access point to the lighting control room. The ticket office is one of many changes that the theater group is trying to make.

Astor Street Opry asks for 'Pennies for Potties,' to keep group growing

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

When the Astor Street Opry Co. relocated to its location on Bond Street in the Uniontown district of Astoria in 2007, it was the group's fourth move since forming in 1984.

The Opry Co. began in an Eagles Club in Astoria, moved into the lobby of the Astor Hotel, then into the Finnish Meat Market, before finding the old Roy's Maytag building at 129 W. Bond St.

After leasing for three years, the Opry Co. purchased the Bond Street location in 2010 with hopes of making it a permanent home.

Judith Niland, Astor Street's volunteer coordinator, said having the stable space has helped develop and hold to an annual schedule of events, including the group's flagship performance of "Shanghaied in Astoria."

The nonprofit organization has grown from one production each year to three original musical melodramas, children's and teen theater, live stage dramas, comedies and other events.

"We know it was the moving that kept breaking down our organization," Niland said. "We never could expand our programs."

'Pennies for Potties'

Niland, a volunteer with the Opry Co. since it began, considers the purchase of the Bond Street location Phase 1 in the group's effort to make the space a mainstay community theater. Basic remodeling over the past five years was Phase 2, she said.

Now, Astor Street is entering



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Volunteer Coordinator Judith Niland of the Astor Street Opry Co. points out some of the areas that need upgrading in the theater.

Phase 3, which they playfully call "Pennies for Potties," because it focuses on fundraising for an indoor bathroom, along with a ticket office and rehearsal space.

To complete the indoor bathroom and office space, Niland said, the estimated cost is about \$280,000. The Opry Co. is seeking grants from places such as the Ford Family Foundation and Meyer Memorial Trust, which previously helped the group purchase its building.

Most grantors require matching funds, Niland said, so the theater group is actively fundraising to collect at least \$130,000. Raising

matching funds shows grantors the community is serious about the project, she said.

So far, Astor Street has raised about \$30,000 in cash donations and \$30,000 from in-kind donations to total about \$60,000. There is no time line for the fundraising, Niland said, because many of the grantors accept applications year-round.

The project's cost did cause some sticker shock, Niland said, but the work is extensive and necessary for the theater. The additions will be earthquake-proofed and the original theater space will be structurally retrofitted.

HOW TO HELP

To donate to the Astor Street Opry Co., visit www.astorstree-toprycompany.com, click on the donation button, or mail donations to ASOC, P. O. Box 743, Astoria, OR. 97103.

For questions or more information, contact ASOC Fundraising Chairman Chuck Meyer at 503-325-7969 or chuck555sara@gmail.com

A new indoor bathroom would replace the porta-potties outside the theater. The indoor bathroom would be cleaner, warmer and allow more use during intermissions.

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A living, breathing oil slick

Coast Guard responds to 'oil spills,' finds jellyfish instead

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

PACIFIC OCEAN — The billions of small jellyfish-like creatures known as "by-the-wind sailors" washing up on West Coast beaches this spring look like pieces of plastic bleaching on the sand. But as they ride the tide toward those same beaches, mariners are mistaking them for something much more alarming.

Since March, the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River has responded to nine reports of large oil spills off the Oregon and Washington coasts. Some of the slicks stretched for several hundred yards while another was a mile long.

With each report, responders hustled to the area and scanned the water for sunken vessels and people in need of rescue.

See JELLYFISH, Page 11A

Shrimp spray to go away

Sudden reversal followed surge in protests

EO Media staff report

OLYMPIA, Wash. — The Washington State Department of Ecology and the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association (WGHOGA) on Sunday decided to cancel a recently issued permit to use imidacloprid to control a burgeoning native burrowing shrimp population following public outcry.

"One of our agency's goals is to reduce toxics in our environment," Ecology Director Maia Bellon said in a statement Sunday. "We've heard loud and clear from people across Washington that this permit didn't meet their expectations, and we respect the growers' response."

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coast weekend



Indigenous artists

House passes police body cam legislation

Companion bill clarifies right to record police

By PETER WONG
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon House has taken the first step toward regulating how police use body cameras to record their interactions with the public.

A House vote of 50-9 on Tuesday sent House Bill 2975 to the Senate.

The Columbia County sheriff and Hermiston police have decided to equip their officers with body cameras, and Portland is considering it. Mayor Charlie Hales has

endorsed the idea, but equipping the larger Portland police force would be more costly.

Locally, the Astoria budget committee tentatively backed funds for body and vehicle cameras for police.

"We know this technology is new," said Rep. Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, the bill's floor manager. "So I think this is a solid start. I look forward to seeing the policies that agencies develop in their communities."

However, the bill does not require police to use them.

Under the bill, officers can activate cameras "continuously" upon reasonable suspicion or probable cause that a crime or violation is being committed. The camera can be turned



EO Media Group file

The Hermiston Police Department has issued lapel-mounted body cameras to all its patrol officers. The Oregon House has passed legislation regulating their use.

off once an officer's participation ends.

Officers must announce a body camera is in use, but

agencies can make exceptions based on privacy, public safety or "exigent circumstances," such as when an officer attempts to thwart someone from committing a crime or interviews a vulnerable witness.

Although the bill would shield most police video from disclosure — similar to video shot from cameras mounted in patrol cars — it does provide an exception if public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold it.

"I am not sure who is going to determine that," said Rep. Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass, a broadcaster who voted against the bill.

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