



Gone Goonies!

FRIDAY EXTRA • 2C



WEEKEND EDITION



What are kids reading?

FRIDAY EXTRA • 3C

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

142nd YEAR, No. 248

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2015

ONE DOLLAR

An alternative for a better life



Graduate Sarah Clark, right, hugs instructional assistant Deanna Rascoe during the Gray School Campus Alternative Education Program graduation ceremony at the Capt. Robert Gray School Thursday.

Photos by JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Eleven finish high school in a different way to overcome trials

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County's alternative high school education program just finished possibly its best year to date Thursday.

Gray School Campus Alternative Education Program, operated by Astoria School District to help struggling students from throughout the county, celebrated 11 of its 25 enrolled students finishing high school throughout the year.

The graduates came from Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside to be AHS students studying mostly on-line on the second floor of the Capt. Robert Gray School building. At Gray, lead teacher Alexa Knutsen, counselor Rachel Rollins, assistant Deanna Rascoe, teachers and counselors from the high school and community volunteers help the students finish remaining credits to get a diploma.

Knutsen, in her third year, said this is the program's best performance since she joined. She said AHS Principal Lynn Jackson and Superintendent Craig Hoppes have given her and the staff free rein to create the kind of program that shepherds its students to graduation.

On Thursday, Knutsen and Rollins handed out awards to the graduates, from Biggest Heart and Mr. Motivation to Most Organized and the Master of Mindfulness.

Community effort

Knutsen also thanked the large number of volunteers who help



Graduate Kylee Pitts hugs school nurse Lisa McClean during the alternative high school graduation ceremony at the Capt. Robert Gray School Thursday.



Jordan Lance greets Dan "The Carrot Man" Strite, a regular volunteer with the Gray School Campus Alternative Education Program during graduation at the Capt. Robert Gray School Thursday.

make the campus click, from the teachers, counselors, school nurse and administrators at the high school to the community members

who volunteer their time to provide food, tutoring, mentorship and emotional support to the students.

"I'll cry a lot today," a teary-eyed Knutsen said, asking students to send letters of thanks to Dan "The Carrot Man" Strite, who comes in every Tuesday to hand out fresh carrots, apples and magic tricks but has been sidelined by health problems.

Shortly thereafter, Strite surprised the graduates, stopping in for graduation. Also there was Frank Loyd, pastor at the Astoria Christian Church, which provides goody bags and meals to help hold students over the weekend.

"They're not here to pat themselves on the back," Knutsen said. "They're not here for their own accord. They're here because they believe in what we're doing."

The Gray clique

Most of the students at Gray work part- to full-time jobs; a few have children of their own; and most faced bullying or other challenges at their previous schools.

Brittany Alley, 18, said her sophomore year, she was suspended during finals week at Seaside High School and ended up leaving to go the college to get her GED. But finding herself in a room with a bunch of older students, she said, made her uncomfortable. Her counselor from Seaside, Travis Cave, called Knutsen, who then reached out to Alley and helped her enroll at Gray.

See GRADUATION, Page 8A

Serial burglar says he's 'sorry'

Man says he meant no harm, was cold, hungry

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria man responsible for several South Slope burglaries wants the victims to know their homes were not invaded by some sinister criminal, but rather someone struggling to survive.

Before being sentenced to two years in prison Thursday in Clatsop County Circuit Court, Jesse Allan Pitts, 32, apologized to the multiple victims, claiming he understood the fear and diminished sense of security he created. None of the victims attended the court hearing.

"Coming from my heart and soul, I say to you all, forgive me for my actions during a drastic period of

See BURGLAR, Page 8A

Lawyers seek to split trials in toddler murder

Seaside couple blame each other in statements

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Lawyers representing the live-in boyfriend accused of murdering his girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter filed a motion Thursday asking the court for separate trials.

Dorothy Ann Wing, 25, and Randy Lee Roden, 27, are co-defendants set to face trial April 5, 2016.

In the motion to sever, Roden's defense lawyers, Conor Huseby and Robert Axford, argue the two are not charged with the same crimes and both have made numerous and extensive statements about the events and both implicate the other.

"Mr. Roden and Ms. Wing do not have the same charges. The charges

See TRIAL, Page 8A

Claws! Monster machine remakes jetty

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT, Wash. — The rock looks like the prow of a ship. At 11 tons, it could easily crush the two men who are overseeing its placement on the jetty below. It dangles above them, held tight in enormous metal claws operated by a massive crane.

Jetty stones — some weighing in as heavy as 27 tons — have been arriving at Cape Disappointment State Park in Ilwaco for months now as critical repairs on North Jetty continue. The repairs are just one small piece of a massive effort to rehabilitate and repair all three jetties at the mouth of the Columbia River. The system is long overdue for such work, according to reports by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The two largest jetties, Washington's North Jetty and Oregon's South Jetty, stretch out into the Pacific Ocean, protecting channels that keep the river open and accessible to both cargo and fishing traffic alike.

The Corps, tasked with maintaining the jetty system, is ahead of schedule on repairs to North Jetty and hopes to



DAMIAN MULINIX — EO Media Group

Quarried rocks as large as 27 tons are swung into place by an enormous crane operating on top of North Jetty.

See MACHINE, Page 8A

Everyday People



MONDAY

From AHS to Alaska

