

Hundreds wrestle at Ilwaco camp

SPORTS • 4A



Summer on the land

COAST WEEKEND

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ONE DOLLAR

Johnson's bill helps Warrenton tackle FEMA

SB 306 provides financial aid to get levees repaired, certified

By ERICK BENDEL
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — When state Sen. Betsy Johnson needed a “designated hitter” to tell Salem why her Senate Bill 306 would help small coastal communities, she turned to Warrenton Mayor Mark Kujala. For nearly a decade, Warrenton has

struggled to leap through all of the bureaucratic hoops needed to show the city’s levee system can protect against the 100-year-flood threat posed by the Columbia River — all to no avail.

Without this certification, the levees may be ineligible for accreditation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. And without accreditation, in FEMA’s eyes, the

levees do not exist.

“It’s a bad situation,” Kujala said.

This means that property owners living and laboring behind Warrenton’s levees are, for flood insurance purposes, considered in the flood plain. And, as federal flood insurance subsidies have gradually disappeared in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, many policyholders

have been forced to pay skyrocketing rates.

“Some people are paying more for their flood insurance than for their mortgage on a monthly basis,” Paul Levesque, Tillamook County’s chief of staff, said.

Kujala saw his home flood insurance rates increase from \$400 a year to \$2,400 a year, he said.



Sen. Betsy Johnson



Mark Kujala

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GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF HERITAGE SQUARE



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded the City of Astoria a \$400,000 Brownfields Multipurpose Pilot Grant in 2012 for the Heritage Square site. The city is testing the site for the degree of soil contamination before the site is cleared for redevelopment.

New round of tests help Astoria prepare hole for redevelopment

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The unsightly pit at Heritage Square, a riddle for city planners, might take a little longer to solve.

The state Department of Environmental Quality has asked for more tests to better identify the extent of contamination in the soil and other material on the former Safeway lot.

Astoria wants to cleanse the block to make Heritage Square more enticing for redevelopment. The City Council is exploring a new public library and housing in a mixed-use project, presuming the troublesome hole will eventually be ready to fill.

“I understand and recognize the impatience,” City Manager Brett Es-

tes said. “I understand it. However, these redevelopment projects take a lot of time and, more specifically, environmental cleanup sites take even more.”

Metals and petroleum byproducts

Lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons — or byproducts of petroleum — have been found in soil that was unearthed during construction of the Garden of Surging Waves and in material under a parking lot in the northeast corner of the block. Polychlorinated biphenyls — or PCBs — are also in some of the soil.

Before Safeway, the property was used for a printing press, auto repair and

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

A sign outside of the Heritage Square site explains the history of the site as well as future steps going forward.

Inmates attempt to flee

Men use shower drain grate to shatter window

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

A Seaside man accused of attempted murder in a hammer attack and another inmate attempted to escape from Clatsop County Jail early Sunday morning.

Kevin Michael Burnham and Anthony Craig Osborne broke off a shower drain grate, tied it to a bedsheet and swung it against a window until the window shattered.

The inmates then flooded a toilet in the cellblock and added soap to make the floor slippery for any responding corrections officers.

Their plan was foiled once a corrections officer started hearing the muffled thumping sound of the grate hitting the window.

“They put soapy water all over the floor,” Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin said. “Had the corrections officers gone in they could have slipped and fell. Our corrections officers are smart enough not to rush into something like that.”

The officers detained Burnham and Osborne at about 1 a.m. Sunday and placed them back into a different part of the jail. They are both being charged with first-degree attempted escape and first-degree criminal mischief.

Burnham, 25, of Seaside, is in custody for attempted murder after allegedly assaulting another man with a hammer in February. His defense attorney and the prosecution are trying to reach a plea deal on the case.

Prosecutor Dawn Buzzard said she is not budging from her offer of 70 months, or about six years, in prison for Burnham to plead to a lesser charge of second-degree robbery.

Burnham reportedly told officers the reason he tried to escape was because the District Attorney’s Office gave him such a bad deal on the attempted murder case.

Osborne, 24, of Seaside, is in custody on theft, burglary and drug charges.

The new charges could add about 30 months, or more than two years, to their sentences.

“They conceived a scheme to break out and fortunately the staff was far too attentive for that to occur,” Bergin said.

The two inmates shared a cellblock with 13 other inmates when they made the attempted escape. The other inmates had to



Kevin Michael Burnham



Anthony Craig Osborne

City, property owner resolve straw squabble

Landscaping bales coming back in batches

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The city has signed off on a retired physician’s plan to use 9 tons of straw for a landscaping project off Niagara Avenue, ending a dispute that kindled questions about fire risk and property rights.

Jean Reitman, who bought the straw to stabilize a slope she had cleared of invasive Himalayan blackberry, met with Fire Chief Ted Ames Friday and the pair agreed the straw would be returned to her home in batches.

Jeff Harrington, the city engineer, also approved Reitman’s landscaping plan.

“I think that Ted Ames and Jeff Harrington proved to be very solid men of integrity,” Reitman said, reserving harsher descriptions for others at the city.

The city confiscated what Ames called a “mountain” of straw in late June after the fire chief determined the bales posed a fire risk in unstable weather. The city’s Public Works Department also found that the straw was in a public right-of-way.

‘I’m just going to say how well everything ended up.’

Jean Reitman

Reitman and the city reached an agreement soon after that the bales would be returned in small batches. But the two sides were back to impasse after Reitman wanted larger quantities. She had warned the City Council last

week that she was considering legal action.

Reitman said she intends to brief the City Council Monday night on the progress. She said City Councilor Drew Herzig, who represents her neighborhood, even helped return some of the straw.

“I’m just going to say how well everything ended up,” she said. “And just to point out that I think that, in the future, if something like this happens again with another resident, just to be sure — really sure — to follow due process.”

Harrington described the landscaping project as “a very well thought-out plan.” As long as Reitman follows the steps, he said, the bales will be brought back in increments and “everything should be fine.”



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