



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

143rd YEAR,

No. 81

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

ONE DOLLAR



Tales from the grave

Talking Tombstones brings dead back to life for 12th year

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

Cemeteries didn't always creep people out. Before the 20th century, the presence of the dead didn't fill the living with fear and disquiet, according to McAndrew Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society.

"We've seen too many scary thriller movies," he said. "Once upon a time, cemeteries were parks — they're outdoors — and it was a place where families would go to picnic and reminisce and reconnect with a lost loved one."

The Historical Society hopes to resurrect that old feeling of fondness with Talking Tombstones, an annual living-history event where volunteers bring the dearly departed back to life in a noncreepy way: by portraying

the people buried underfoot. "Talking Tombstones XII: A Serious Undertaking" will be held 1 p.m. to dusk Sunday at the Clatsop Plains Pioneer Cemetery. Viewers move from gravesite to gravesite and watch as approximately 10 re-enactors, dressed in period clothing and aided by props, "become" the deceased for about five minutes — a transformation borne of serious research and a playful imagination.

See TALES, Page 7A



Hugh McKenna/For The Daily Astorian

Steve Nurning put in extra creativity to portray Thaddeus Trullinger, an electrician who replaced the hand-pulled lever with electric switches on gallows used in hangings in Astoria in 1894, during the 10th-annual Talking Tombstones.

'We've seen too many scary thriller movies. Once upon a time, cemeteries were parks — they're outdoors — and it was a place where families would go to picnic and reminisce and reconnect with a lost loved one.'

McAndrew Burns

executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society



Hugh McKenna/For The Daily Astorian

ShawnAnn Hope portrays Dr. Bethania Owens Adair, the first woman doctor in the Pacific Northwest, during the 10th-annual Talking Tombstones.

Astoria may get a Marriott

Hotelier gets Port lease to examine the possibilities

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

When competing to operate the Astoria Riverwalk Inn, Bellingham, Washington, hotelier Mark Hollander said he would also like to bring a Marriott hotel to Astoria. Now is his chance.

The Port of Astoria Commission on Tuesday approved a lease for nearly 1.5 acres near the Maritime Memorial in Uniontown to Hollander to study the feasibility of building a Marriott hotel.

The leased land includes two parcels running along the north and south side of the Astoria Riverfront Trolley tracks between the Red Building and Ocean Beauty Seafoods on one side, and the Maritime Memorial and Astoria Bridge on the other.

See MARRIOTT, Page 10A

Housing crunch

Private, public partners discuss affordable housing shortfall in county

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

Most people agree there is a lack of affordable, family and workforce housing in Clatsop County. Finding solutions to the nuanced problem must start with a collective effort, according to many who attended a "housing huddle" organized by Clatsop Economic Development Resources on Tuesday.

This collective effort kicked off with a two-hour conversation at Clatsop Community College that involved about 50 people representing various private and public entities, including Providence Seaside Hospital and the college; state, county and local governments; businesses; building and contracting companies; banks and financing institutions and numerous other organizations and agencies.

While the problem is mutual, and has been identified as an economic barrier along the North Coast, each city has its own set of obstacles that has stunted new affordable housing.

See HOUSING, Page 10A

Barn owner, Gearhart spar over definition of rental

Is Neacoxie Barn an event center or a short-term rental?

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — The lack of a short-term rental ordinance may haunt the city of Gearhart.

With 82 rental properties in Gearhart, Neacoxie Barn owner Shannon Smith's attorney said Monday she is "renting" her property to guests, an activity unregulated by the city.

This and other arguments were presented to Judge John Orr as Smith responded to charges she was oper-

ating a barn leased for commercial events. The charges brought two \$500 tickets from events held this summer.

Since Gearhart doesn't have a short-term rental ordinance, there are no rules preventing Smith from renting her space out to clients, her attorney, Dan Kearns, said.

"Part of the evidence you took at trial was short-term rentals," Kearns said. "The city doesn't view that as something they're required to permit. It's accessory use of residential property, which is expressly allowed under city code. She's renting her property for short-term use for people who want to have their wedding there, they're gathering there."

Gearhart City Attorney Peter Watts said the barn is nothing like

the types of short-term vacation rentals now being considered by the city for regulation.

"There's a substantial difference between a family renting a home and a couple renting this barn to host 99 of their friends," Watts said.

"Aren't you cherry-picking?" Orr asked. "We have testimony that we have local short-term rentals that are advertising themselves as available for weddings."

"A transient vacation rental is exempted from license requirement and she is not," Watts said.

In a previous court date, witnesses stated Smith had been marketing and renting her barn for up to \$2,600 a night, payable via PayPal only.

See GEARHART, Page 10A



The Daily Astorian/File Photo
Shannon Smith after September's court hearing.

