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ONE DOLLAR



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Di Stuppy of Seaside smiles as she picks out a teddy bear for a young child at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds Wednesday as part of the Wishing Tree program. The program will help more than 600 kids this Christmas.

Women stranded in high water

Calls for help went unheeded, family says

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

Tuesday night's rain and flooding brought a night of trauma for an Astoria family.

Kari Steadman was returning home with her aunt, Marilyn Keno, home from a medical appointment. They had driven west through high water on U.S. Highway 26 the whole way, when they exited at the U.S. Highway 101 junction headed north to Seaside at about 7 p.m.

As rain intensified, Keno, 71, drove her Ford Taurus, "slow, very carefully, but they had no idea the water was so high," Steadman's mother, Patti Brockhoff, said. "As soon as they hit the water, the car stalled and they started flooding."

Steadman was in the passenger seat.

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A wish, an ornament, a promise

Wishing Tree helps children in need

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Donated gifts and food are starting to pile up at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds through the annual Astoria Wishing Tree and Food Basket Program.

Since taking over the fairgrounds Monday, the program has collected enough toys for 645 children and food for more than 300 families.

Barbara Roberts, the Wishing Tree coordinator for the past 25 years, said she hopes to see the numbers continue to grow until the program's "Pickup Day" on Dec. 19.

"I don't know what we are going to expect on the 19th," Roberts said. "As long as I have toys to give them, we are going to be OK." The Wishing Tree program begins each year with children in need writing their gift requests on paper bell ornaments, which are then placed on Christmas trees in local businesses around the area.

Those interested in donating can act as a "secret Santa" and take a paper bell off one of the trees. Purchased gifts for the children are placed unwrapped under the trees. Volunteers gather the gifts and bring them to the fairgrounds, where they are organized for Pickup Day.

There are still many paper bell ornaments hanging on trees, Roberts said.

Popular gift requests this year are for Legos, items from the movie "Frozen," and Barbies.

Volunteer support

Roberts relies on the help of about eight vol-



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Stuffed toys sit in a bag at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

unteers to collect the presents from under the trees each day and organize them back at the fairgrounds. Volunteers also help sort additional donations and use them to fill any gaps with a child's wish on their bell ornaments.

It's a system that has worked for a quarter century.

"She works on it all yearlong," Steve Roberts, Barbara's husband, said. "It took us years to get everything to where it is now."

This year, the volunteers have been assisted by some Astoria High School students. The students are participating in the program as part of their senior projects.

Each student must put in 20 hours of

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WISHING TREES

- Wauna Credit Union, 100 Columbia Ave., Astoria
- Wauna Credit Union, 107 U.S. Highway 101, Warrenton
- Wells Fargo, 1218 Commercial St., Astoria
- TLC Credit Union, 85 W Marine Drive, Astoria
- Fred Meyer, 695 U.S. Highway 101, Warrenton
- Safeway, 3250 Lief Erikson Drive, Astoria
- Bank of the Pacific, 303 11th St., Astoria
- Columbia Bank, 1122 Duane St., Astoria
- Columbia Bank, 630 Marlin Drive, Warrenton
- Astoria Aquatic Center, 1997 Marine Drive, Astoria
- McDonald's, 645 Marine Drive, Astoria
- Video Horizons, 750 Astor St., Astoria

Driver in fatal crash high on meth

Longview, Wash., woman sentenced to six-plus years

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The amount of methamphetamine in Michelle Lynn Fletcher's body was considered off the charts when she crashed her pickup truck last summer, killing a Warrenton man and injuring two others.

Fletcher had more than 1,300 nanograms of methamphetamine in



Michelle Lynn Fletcher

her blood at the time of the crash. Drivers are considered incapable of safely driving with more than 100 nanograms in their system. "This crash was caused by her being so high on meth," Clatsop County

Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said.

Fletcher, 40, of Longview, Washington, was sentenced to more than six years in prison Thursday during a hearing in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

Last month, she pleaded guilty to criminal negligence homicide, two counts of fourth-degree assault and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

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For Astoria distillery, brand competition is sobering

Owner changed name to avoid trademark suit

By CYNTHIA WASHICKO
EO Media Group

When a California brewer threatened a trademark lawsuit against his Astoria distillery, Larry Cary opted to change the name of his growing business rather than go to court.

Formerly North Coast Distilling, Cary's downtown Astoria storefront and tasting room in Seaside now sport the name Pilot House Spirits. The rebranding cost him more than \$10,000, a price that included legal fees as well as changing signage and printing new bottle labels.

North Coast Brewing, a Fort Bragg, California, brewery that opened in 1988, is known for craft beer, not spir- its like Cary's hand-crafted

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Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Larry Cary changed the name of his North Coast Distilling to Pilot House Spirits to avoid a trademark challenge.

