

OLD FILM CASTS NEW LIGHT ON NORTH COAST

FRIDAY EXTRA • 1C



ASTORIA, SEASIDE TAKE LOSSES

SPORTS • 7A



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

From left: Jerry Reagor, Pat O'Brien and John Anderson, speak at a panel discussion about the construction of the Astoria Bridge held in the Fort George Lovell Showroom on Wednesday.

Smith to go to state hospital for testing

Judge finds reason to doubt mental fitness

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

A Clatsop County Circuit Court judge ordered accused murderer Jessica Smith be sent to the Oregon State Hospital to determine if she is mentally ill or faking her behavior.

Judge Cindee Matyas found there is reason to doubt Smith's mental fitness to proceed based on her recent suicide attempt and an inconclusive report from a court-appointed psychologist.

The judge ordered Smith stay at the state hospital for up to a month to be evaluated and observed. A court hearing that was scheduled for later this month was canceled.

After the hospital stay, Smith will be transferred back to Clatsop County Jail. A status hearing is scheduled for late May.



Jessica Smith

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'The worst weather I ever worked in, period'

Fifty years later, workers recall Astoria Bridge construction

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Working high above the Columbia River to build the Astoria Bridge a half century ago, crews braved torrential rain and high winds. The workers would hang on to ropes and walk across the bridge on small wooden planks, often while rain came at them horizontally.

John Anderson, who worked as a crane operator on the bridge, jokes that the driest people on the job were probably the divers in the water.

"It's the worst weather I ever worked in, period," he said.

Anderson was joined by two other workers this week for a panel discussion in Astoria as a part of "Bridge Talks," a monthly series hosted by the Clatsop County Historical Society. The presentations and discussions mark the bridge's 50th anniversary this summer.

50 years later

McAndrew Burns, the executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society, is planning to recreate a ribbon-cutting dedication that was held Aug. 27, 1966. The recreation

will likely happen during Astoria Regatta weekend.

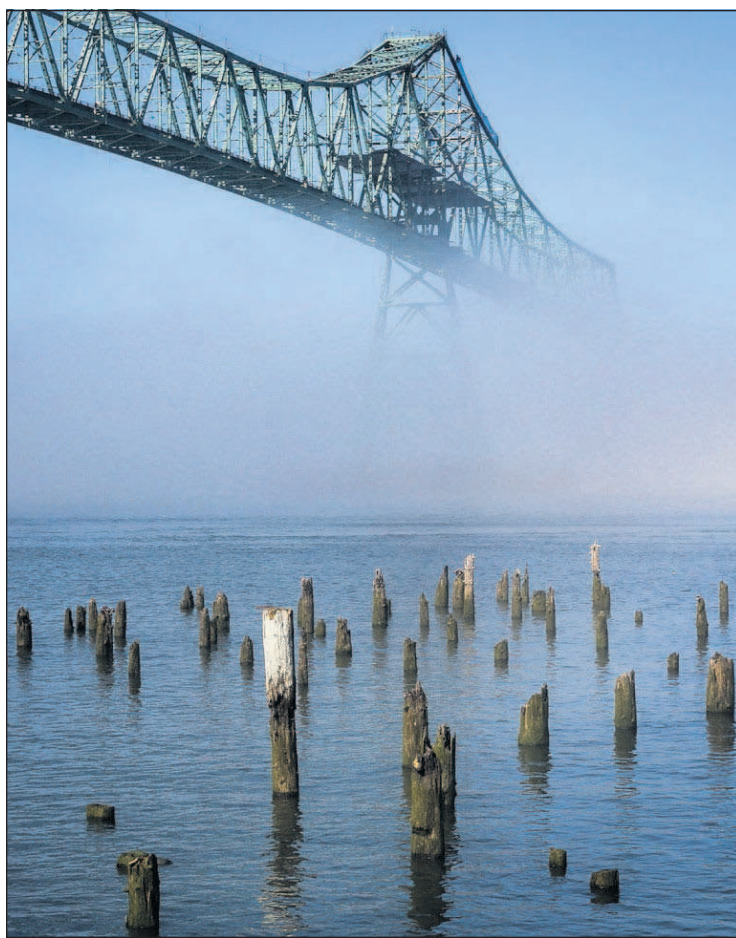
An exhibit on the story of the bridge opened this week inside the historical society's Heritage Museum. Information on the bridge has also been compiled online at www.astoriamegler50.com.

While researching the bridge history for the exhibit and anniversary events, Burns was able to track down more than a dozen people who worked on the 4.1-mile span.

Three were able to come back to Astoria this week and share their experiences.

Jerry Reagor, a general inspector, and Pat O'Brien, owner of Astoria Ready Mix, spoke on the panel with Anderson.

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Bridge opened on July 29, 1966, connecting Astoria to the Washington side of the river at the unincorporated town of Megler.

Warrenton to part ways with South Jetty High

Program serves school-age prisoners

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton-Hammond School District will cut ties in June with South Jetty High School, an outreach program that helps young prisoners earn their diplomas.

Superintendent Mark Jeffery gave notice Wednesday to the state Department of Education, citing financial and programmatic issues.

"My decision is no reflection on the work that Rich and his staff have done," Jeffery told the school board Tuesday, referring to South Jetty



The Daily Astorian/File Photo

Graduates walk across the yard to the South Jetty High School graduation ceremony. The Warrenton-Hammond School District will cease providing educational services for the prison this summer.

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Short-term rental rules confound Gearhart

Regulations could prompt legal action

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — Residents sounded off on short-term rentals Thursday night as more than 100 filled the firehouse and spilled outside at a Planning Commission hearing.

Those who spoke — and more than 60 signed up to do so — were responding to proposed rules that could sharply limit the number of properties used as short-term rentals. The new rules limit the number of vacation rentals to 35, to be obtained by a lottery process.

Proposed rules specify that the use of a home for a vacation rental shall not exceed one rental within seven consecutive calendar days and limit the number of guests per bedroom, off-street parking spaces and septic system capacity. The regulations also mandate a 24-hour owner representative and notice to neighbors.

Three minutes each

Speakers, limited to three minutes each, covered the gamut, from adoption of the proposed rules to calls to abandon the regulation process altogether.

"Short-term rentals are part of the core of Gearhart," resident Harold Gable said.

Gable and others urged "universal enforcement" of the present ordinances rather than adoption of the regulations.

Lynn Nichols and a handful of those who declared themselves "neutral" asked the

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