

FEW FISH BITE, BUT DERBY STILL DELIGHTS

Astoria fisheries class stocks lake with prize rainbow trout

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Amid hundreds of trout reeled in Saturday by anglers at Coffenburg Lake, Astoria High School's trophy stock remained elusive.

Upperclassmen in Lee Cain's fisheries technology class came in the dead of the night Friday to release 69 rainbow trout tagged with prizes donated by local businesses.

Only nine tagged fish were caught, but the fundraiser, now in its sixth year, drew in 110 fishers and \$1,100.

"That pretty much takes care of fisheries technologies materials for the year for experimental research," Cain said.

Cain runs an aquatic biology program in the Eldon Korpela Applied Science Center above the high school, complete with an attached hatchery rearing up to 30,000 Chinook and 5,000 coho eggs a year for release as juveniles each May into Youngs Bay. The program includes a yearlong fisheries technology course upperclassmen can apply for after completing prerequisites.

Cain's advanced fisheries students, known as "fish techs," raise the trout, seek donated prizes from local businesses and staff the derby. The proceeds go to the research projects of next year's class in a revolving fund.

Astoria graduate Brooke Cross, on a visit home from Western Oregon University, said she woke up at 5:30 a.m. Saturday to be out at the lake by the 7 a.m. start of the derby. After nearly eight hours of trying and a good number of smaller catches, she landed a nearly 2-pound rainbow trout, the only high-value trophy fish caught all day.

Otter mayhem

Senior Devon Nikkila chalked the lackluster catches up to lethargy from travel and temperature differences. Many of the trout in Saturday's derby had to be trucked up from hatcheries near Netarts and Hebo to Astoria, after otters invaded the high school's hatchery and went fishing.

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Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian
Astoria High School graduate Tim Welsh took in one of the hundreds of untagged trout caught Saturday at Coffenburg Lake. A tagged rainbow trout, part of a fundraiser for the aquatic biology program, proved more elusive, with only nine caught all day.



It took most of the day, but Astoria High School graduate Brooke Cross caught the biggest tagged rainbow trout of the day her first time out at her alma mater's fishing derby fundraiser. With her is Nick Ketcham, another graduate and former aquatic biology student, who after three derbies said he has yet to win a prize.



ABOVE: Students in Astoria High School's aquatic biology program, including senior Devon Nikkila, ran rainbow trout Friday night from their school hatchery to an oxygen-fed tank in the back of a district truck for transport to Coffenburg Lake for the derby fundraiser Saturday. BELOW: More than 100 anglers of all ages took to the bucolic Coffenburg Lake Saturday to fish in a derby supporting Astoria High School's aquatic biology program.



Astorian hopes to sail around world, into history

Woman trains for the journey of a lifetime

Niccolea Miouo Nance wanted a way to see the world. Luckily, she had a friend wanting to sail around it.

In a year, Nance, 45, hopes to start her journey from the West End Mooring Basin in Astoria to circumnavigate the globe with her live-aboard roommate Dovid Smith and his cat, Capt. Nigel Shortbottom.

Adding to the intrigue is the possibility Nance could be the first African-American woman to circle the globe on a sailboat. She has been researching circumnavigations for the past few years.

EVERYDAY people



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian
Niccolea Miouo Nance, left, Dovid Smith and Capt. Nigel Shortbottom are preparing to depart next year on a multiyear voyage around the world.

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Cannon Beach selects fire chief

Pendleton fire marshal will receive offer

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District will make an offer to Matt Benedict, the Pendleton fire marshal, to serve as fire chief.

In a special meeting Friday, members of the district's board of directors unanimously agreed to offer the job to Benedict contingent on the successful negotiation of an employment package and contract.



Matt Benedict

"He'll be a great addition to our system," Director Garry Smith said at the meeting.

The salary for the fire chief's job is \$67,500 to \$75,000, depending on qualifications.

"We had a great meeting with him," Board of Directors Chairwoman Sharon

Clyde said. "We hope we will be able to negotiate with him."

In addition to being Pendleton's fire marshal, Benedict is the chief of the all-volunteer Helix Rural Fire Protection District.

He was selected from a field narrowed to former Pendleton Chief Gary Woods and John West of the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

"All three of them were very good," Clyde said. "He (Benedict) seemed like he would fit in very nicely — as they all did — with the firefighters and the community."

Interim Chief Jim Stearns said after the meeting the board will now contact the candidates and let them know, and contact the Special Districts Association of Oregon.

Stearns said he will remain at the "will of the board."

"Hopefully we'll get this fellow on board June 1," Stearns said. "Beyond that, I'll stay as long as need be."

The board is looking to replace former Fire Chief Mike Balzer, who was fired in October.

Balzer has since filed a lawsuit against the fire district claiming wrongful dismissal. Three fire board members turned back a recall election in early April. The recall effort stemmed from frustration among some residents over the board's handling of Balzer's firing.

High-level staff depart Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare

State, internal reviews ongoing

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Several high-level staff at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare have resigned, raising another layer of concern about the agency's ability to function effectively as Clatsop County's mental-health contractor.

The departures come amid state and internal reviews into management that stem from community doubts about the quality of care and a union staff vote of "no confidence" in the agency's clinical director.

"We can confirm there have been some recent resignations for various reasons," Nick Benas, the director of business operations at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, said in an email Friday. "From an individual protection, legal and policy standpoint, we are not able to disclose any related information."

"We are taking prompt action to fill these positions to ensure continuity of service for our clients. Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare continues to be grateful for the service of all our staff. We are committed to building a culture of professional excellence to support those we serve."

The agency declined to disclose the job titles of staff who have resigned — or confirm a list given to The Daily Astorian — but

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