



Photo Courtesy of Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley
With a salute, Coast Guard Capt. Bruce Jones, left, passes his command of Sector Columbia River to Capt. Daniel Travers, right, during the change of command ceremony in 2014. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Richard Gromlich, commander of the Coast Guard's District 13, oversaw the passage from Jones to Travers.

Travers: 'I'm going out at the absolute pinnacle of things'

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Colorful tenure

Just days before his retirement, Travers is showing the ropes to Timmons, who used to be an executive officer at the air station and is coming to the sector from the Pacific Area Command.

Hands down the most memorable situation during his tenure at Sector Columbia River, he said, was the Fennica protests on the Willamette River. The damaged Royal Dutch Shell icebreaker came into Vigor Marine's shipyards in Portland in July for repairs. The vessel was temporarily blocked from leaving by protesters opposed to oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge who suspended themselves by ropes from the St. Johns Bridge and formed a kayak blockade in the Willamette River.

The Coast Guard took the lead, organizing multiple law enforcement agencies to clear protesters from the bridge and river, with numerous civil penalties issued but only two arrests. Like with protests over dams on the Snake River and a liquefied natural gas plant near Coos Bay, Travers said the Coast Guard's focus was on ensuring people's First Amendment rights but keeping the river open to ship traffic. He credited good teamwork between agencies for the relatively peaceful outcome.

On sea and land

Travers said he is especially proud of the 2015 Aviation Standardization Excellence Award he said Air Station Astoria is receiving for stations using MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters.

"We are the premier inland rescue station in the Coast Guard," Travers said.

While regularly rescuing people on the coast and in the Pacific Ocean, Sector Columbia River has also per-

formed numerous high-profile rescues in the Cascade Mountains, most recently extracting an injured kayaker at Spirit Falls in the Columbia River Gorge last month. In November, the Coast Guard helped shuttle rescuers to a landing on Mount Jefferson to reach a stranded husband and wife.

Travers said the diverse terrain in which his pilots operate makes them some of the most skilled in the country, with some junior pilots comparing favorably to commanders at other air stations.

Why Astoria?

Travers is pretty sure he, Jones and Kaup share similar reasons for wanting to stay. Astoria is also home to retired Adm. Edward Nelson, who Travers said commanded Sector Columbia River from 1971 to 1974.

"It's the community," Travers said. "When you leave this job, you start fresh every two or three years. You have to build all these new relationships. If you're coming out of here, and you've built the relationships, it's hard to step away from that."

Travers sees himself working at least 15 more years in the private sector, while expanding his volunteerism. He already volunteers with Clatsop County United Way and the Astoria Regatta.

His wife, C.C., will continue teaching math at Warrenton Grade School. The couple have two daughters, Jenna and Kristen, who will be a freshman and senior, respectively, next year at Astoria High School. This time next year, Travers will be busy attending the graduations of Kristen from Astoria and his son, Ben, from the University of Michigan.

"I'm going out at the absolute pinnacle of things," Travers said. "This is the way you want to end your Coast Guard career."

Display: 'We know there's something about craftsmanship that has been lost'

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"Caring, reaching, growing, connecting, the Astoria bridges are never rejecting," she said. "Take you across from land to land, and soon you will go back over again."

Craftsmanship

Suenn Ho, the designer behind the Garden of Surging Waves, was chosen by the state to create the interpretive display.

She researched the history of the bridges and McCullough. Her team incorporated salvaged materials from the two historic Astoria bridges. They buried wooden trestles from underneath the Lewis and Clark River Bridge around the display, topped by historical photos. Next to the trestles were the antique drawspan gears from the Old Youngs Bay Bridge, half-buried and half on display to visitors.

"I realized there's something very profound to relieve them from the gear room and daylight them after 100 years of working," Ho said. "We know there's something about craftsmanship that has been lost."

Ho, an architectural teacher, said she searched for the old architectural drawings of the bridges and was again struck by McCullough's craftsmanship.

"I have students who don't know how to draw by hand, and yet these drawings were all done by hand," she said. "So I know there's something very important, that we want to tell the story of ... the ability to make things by hand, the craft."

In that vein, Ho also reached out to student welders Bronson Holthusen and Clay Englund, seniors at Astoria High School. The two welded a tree stump, complete with branch stubs and bark, in which student poems and art were placed. The time capsule was sealed Tuesday, with no date set for excavation.

Bridge Work

Work on the Lewis and Clark River Bridge, the only remaining single-leaf bascule drawspan in the state, was completed by Labor Day weekend. The bridge was one of several identified by the state as functionally obsolete, not necessarily unsafe but also not meeting current design standards.

Dave True, a project manager with the Department of Transportation, said the project involved replacing some wooden pilings with steel, while wrapping others in protective fiberglass jackets to protect from rot, a common issue with bridge substructures continually submerged and revealed by tidally influenced waters.

Work is scheduled to continue through November 2017 on the Old Youngs Bay Bridge, one of four double-leaf bascule drawspans in the state. The bridge was identified as one of

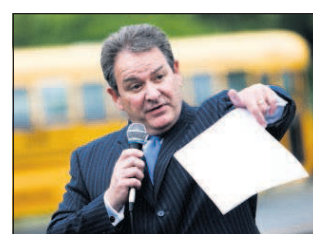


Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The display features purposely rusted panels festooned with historic drawings, biographical information and Lewis and Clark Elementary School students' poems and drawings.



Student welders from Astoria High School created a time capsule looking like a tree trunk, which contains poems and artwork by Lewis and Clark Elementary School students. The capsule was sealed and buried during an interpretive display dedication Tuesday.



Oregon Department of Transportation Director Matthew Garrett speaks during a bridge interpretive display dedication Tuesday.



Astoria High School senior Clay Englund prepares to bury a time capsule he and fellow senior Bronson Holthusen (not pictured) helped design and weld for an interpretive display dedicated Tuesday. More photos available online at DailyAstorian.com

the major structurally deficient spans in the county, not necessarily failing, but in need of significant repairs.

The bascule style of bridge uses a counterweight to balance the raising span — also known as a "leaf" — throughout the upswing, providing clearance for boat traffic.

As of 2013, the average traffic count on Old Youngs Bay Bridge was 20,000 vehicles per day, along with 11,400 vehicles a day on the Lewis and Clark River Bridge. Lou Torres, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation, said the work being done will add decades to the lifespans of both bridges.

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