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FRIDAY EXTRA • 1C

## Death penalty case goes to trial

Judge says no to excluding grisly evidence in Seaside toddler murder

By **KYLE SPURR**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Circuit Court judge.

Judge Paula Brownhill ruled against the defense lawyers for Randy Roden, the live-in boyfriend accused of murdering his girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter and abusing her two

sons in their Seaside apartment.

During a two-day hearing in April, defense lawyers Thomas Huseby and Robert Axford argued for the case to be dismissed, or at least to have evidence excluded, such as the adult-

sized bite marks found on the three children, the blood spatter in the apartment and the use of the term "torture."

Judge Brownhill denied the defense lawyers' requests this week

in a written opinion. She did defer her ruling on the bite mark evidence and asked for a private hearing before testimony is given at trial.

Overall, Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said he is pleased with the judge's ruling to

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## FREE TO LEARN

Young inmates step up to earn their diplomas



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Greg Slate of Klamath Falls, center left, shares a laugh with his fellow graduates after making a speech during the South Jetty High School graduation ceremony Thursday at the North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Corey Johnson-Fleishman smiles at his family in the crowd during the South Jetty High School graduation ceremony on Thursday in Warrenton.

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**WARRENTON** — On graduation day at South Jetty High School, 10 students proudly received their diplomas, joining two others who had graduated earlier and another who passed his GED exam Thursday. The milestone meant a quarter of the inmate population inside the North Coast Youth Correctional Facility had finished high school.

The graduations were a feather in the cap for Warrenton-Hammond School District, which has administered the educational services at South Jetty since the 2000s and built a strong reputation for student completion. Citing funding and programmatic concerns, the district announced earlier it would not continue staffing South Jetty beyond this year.

**Thankful**

Corey Johnson-Fleishman, a graduate Thursday, said he wishes he could have started high school at a place like South Jetty, free of the distractions that got him into trouble.

Locked up as a sophomore with seven credits, he said, he earned 17 more while in custody. Standing with his siblings, girlfriend and stepdaughter Thursday, he felt optimistic about getting out later this month and going to college.

"It feels so good," he said. "I almost feel like a new person."

His mother, Beth, said it was a great reward to see him graduate after such a long, hard road. She and her son also credited his parole officer, Miguel Herrera, for sticking with him.

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## Putting parks in their place

Citizen advisory group recommends new master plan to City Council

By **ERICK BENDEL**  
*The Daily Astorian*

A final draft master plan for the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department calls for a systemwide maintenance plan, reflecting public disappointment with conditions and upkeep at sites under the department's care.

"Many comments collected during surveys and public meetings identified maintenance of existing park and facilities as a top priority, and that acceptable maintenance levels should be achieved before planning for any new development," the master plan reads.

The citizen advisory committee that oversaw the planning process voted Thursday to recommend the final draft to the City Council, which made the creation of a parks' master plan a goal for the current fiscal year.

"I think we have packaged something that gives us a foundation, out which to pull some thinking to some of the major issues that the city faces, and that we, as citizens, are constantly going before the government (about) and saying, 'We're frustrated by this,'" said Jan Nybakke, a committee volunteer, adding that one of the virtues of the plan is that it contains steps to become "unfrustrated" by addressing parks-related issues.

The document — which is posted on the department website and lays out the department's vision, objectives and priorities for the next decade — incorporates feedback gathered from several public meetings, stakeholder focus groups and an online survey.

The draft will come before the Parks Advisory Board and the Planning Commission before it reaches the City Council, which will vote next month on whether to incorporate the master plan into the city's comprehensive plan.

**Time and money**

The parks department has long argued that it doesn't have enough revenue and full-time staff members to adequately maintain the roughly 300 acres of land, nine miles of trails and 12 indoor facilities under its management.

"As the parks system has grown, staff positions across all divisions of the department have been reduced or eliminated to compensate for rising operational costs, resulting in fewer employees responsible for a greater amount of work," the master plan says.

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## ODOT asks for moratorium on Gorge oil trains

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
*Capital Bureau*

**SALEM** — The Oregon Department of Transportation has asked the federal government to put a moratorium on oil trains in the Columbia Gorge and certain other parts of the state over concerns about inadequate inspections.

The request follows the oil train derailment in Mosier June 3, which sparked a fire, forced the evacuation of 100 people and spilled oil into the ground and the city's sewer system.

Union Pacific officials have concluded that the metal fas-

tener system that connects the railroad tie to the rail failed, causing the railway to break apart and derailed 16 oil tanker cars. The federal railroad administration is conducting its own investigation into the cause.

Inspections and tests by the state and Union Pacific in the days leading up to the derailment failed to reveal the defects.

"Until the underlying cause of the bolt failures is understood and, a means of detecting this defect is developed, we request a moratorium on running unit oil trains over sections of track that contain track fasteners of this material

within the state of Oregon," Hal Gard, administrator of the state's Rail and Public Transit Division, wrote in a June 8 letter to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Despite hiring four additional inspectors last year, the state has no effective way to inspect and test the integrity of those bolts. State inspectors conduct only visual inspections, and defects in the kind of bolts used along the Columbia Gorge are not visible when looking from above, said Matthew Garrett, director of the state transportation department.



**Tank cars carrying oil are derailed near Mosier on June 3. The Oregon Department of Transportation has asked for a moratorium on oil trains over concerns about inadequate track inspections.**

Silas Bleakley  
via Associated Press

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