

Warrenton Police looking into gun incident near school

Subject has been trespassed from school

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Warrenton Police Department is investigating an incident that occurred at Warrenton Grade School Friday afternoon, when a neighbor pulled a gun on several people near the portable classrooms.

At about 3 p.m., law enforcement agencies responded to a call from the grade school and ended up arresting Robert Coffindaffer, 48.

Eyewitnesses said Coffindaffer, who lives near the school, had been confronting drivers who parked in the school's fire zone across from his house to pick up students. Coffindaffer has done this for some time, raising concerns for school staff, sources close to the incident said.

"He has had a pattern of going down and telling people that they can't park in that fire zone," Police Chief Mathew Workman said.

On Friday, a driver who arrived to pick up students got out and faced Coffindaffer.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Warrenton Police responded to a scene on Ninth Street and Southwest Cedar Avenue next to Warrenton Grade School on Friday.

"There was a verbal altercation that turned into a physical pushing match," Workman said, adding, "There is a difference of opinion as to who escalated it, according to each side."

Mike Simonsen, a Warrenton resident who was there to pick up his son, stepped between Coffindaffer and the driver to try to stop the fight.

Eventually, the driver spit on Coffindaffer, who then produced a handgun and pointed it at the driver and other people — including Simonsen and at least one teacher — before returning to his house.

Workman said he does not know for sure whether the gun was loaded.

Simonsen attempted to record the skirmish on his phone at one point, but was unsuccessful.

The Warrenton Police Department, Clatsop County

Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police arrived on scene. Officers set up a perimeter, blocking off Southwest Ninth Street at South Main Avenue and Southwest Cedar Drive. They and grade school staff members cleared students and bystanders from the area.

A deputy sheriff, who had Coffindaffer's phone number, called him. Coffindaffer came out with his hands up. He told officers he had made the fire-

arm "safe" and left it in his garage.

Warrenton Police took Coffindaffer into custody. He spent the night in Clatsop County Jail and was released the next morning because of overcrowding.

"I'm very disappointed that this situation got to where it was — where someone felt the need to pull a handgun, especially near a school with ... that many people around and, potentially, put a lot of people in jeopardy," Workman said. "But, then again, he has a side, too, and we're going to take that into account."

Workman said the initial investigation warranted Coffindaffer's arrest and jailing.

Vigilant

It was only afterward, Simonsen said, that the gravity of what happened sank in.

"My son and my wife were both in the truck when I walked over there, so they also saw everything happen. And my little guy said to my wife: 'I thought Dad was going to get shot,'" Simonsen said. "That was, I would say, when reality kicked in for me."

Though Coffindaffer did not step onto the campus during the incident, he

has been trespassed from the school grounds. He is also not allowed to contact the victims.

Originally, the police department compiled a list of half a dozen people whom Coffindaffer aimed the gun at, but more could be added.

"We'd like anybody who witnessed this to come forward and provide us with statements," Workman said.

The district attorney will decide on the final charges.

The Daily Astorian approached Coffindaffer at his home on Monday, but he declined to comment.

Warrenton Grade School Principal Tom Rogozinski did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

However, Rogozinski left a post on the school's Facebook page Friday thanking the police department for their "prompt, professional response," and to the grade school staff for "keeping our students safe and secure."

Simonsen also commended the Warrenton Police Department's quick response, which he called "impressive."

This week, the department is increasing patrol around the school.

"We're going to continue to be vigilant, and, hopefully, this was isolated," Workman said.

Talking Tombstones reveal voices from the past

Program debuts at Evergreen Cemetery

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For EO Media Group

SEASIDE — The Evergreen Cemetery in Seaside came to unusual life Halloween eve when the spirits of several departed locals took form once again to share their stories during Talking Tombstones XIII: Buried Treasure.

A steady stream of visitors, who faced a drizzle afternoon to come hear historic tales from beyond the grave, were introduced to people who lived in Seaside decades ago and both watched and contributed to the city's growth. The ghosts were portrayed by local volunteers.

The special event, presented annually by the Clatsop County Historical Society and co-presented this year by the Seaside Museum and Historical Society, was held for the first time in Seaside.

"We're very excited to introduce this charming cemetery to a lot of people," said McAndrew Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society.

Talking Tombstones was sponsored for the 13th year by Astoria Granite Works.

Meeting the deceased

Using information gleaned from historical documents, the actors took on the life of their respective decedent to share details from their lives.

David Reid played Earl Nolton Hurd, who was affectionately dubbed "Mr. Seaside" for his contributions to the city. Born in 1876, he served in the military and worked for the Oregonian and Oregon Journal before moving to Seaside around 1910.

When he arrived, the



Katherine Lacaze/For EO Media Group

Earl Nolton Hurd, portrayed by David Reid, was known fondly as "Mr. Seaside" because of his contributions to growing the city during the 1900s and establishing Seaside as the end of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

town's population hovered around 400 and the Seaside Signal, which he leased with an option to buy, was a four-column, four-page publication. He had great hopes for the city's future, although other, older residents doubted his vision.

Even two years later, when Seaside suffered a devastating fire that damaged the downtown business district, Hurd "preached the gospel of optimism," according to Reid. Hurd was elected as president of the Seaside City Council on a platform of creating "a bigger and better Seaside."

Hurd served six terms on City Council and then went on to be mayor. He was integral in progressive city projects such as installing miles of sidewalks, public utilities and the Promenade. He also saw to it that Seaside was designated as the end of the Lewis and Clark Trail and the Oregon Trail.

Although Hurd experienced a number of noteworthy events and developments in his lifetime — the television, two world wars, space flight, motorized vehicles and more — "the greatest thing I ever saw was this town grow up to be what those old-timers said it never would," Reid said

as Hurd, who passed away in 1967.

'Friends in life'

One of Hurd's contemporaries and friends, Eva Guinn, portrayed by City Councilor Tita Montero, was born in 1877 — the year Rutherford B. Hayes became president, Alexander Graham Bell invented the phonograph and the Great Railroad Strike took place. She saw the city's growth begin to pick up in the 1930s, although another fire in 1935 struck the historic Gilbert Building downtown, wiping out the old Safeway and Graham Drugstore. Guinn served as a police woman for six years, and she made good friends with Hurd and others.

"We were friends in life and we've stayed closed in death," said Montero as Guinn, who died at age 76 in 1953.

In a nearby grave rests Hannah Nelby Navro, played by Krista Bingham. Navro, of Swedish and Norwegian descent, settled in Seaside with her parents and siblings in the early 20th century. Although her father was an alcoholic who abused his family, divorce was socially unacceptable during that era, and Navro's mother stayed in her

marriage. According to Bingham, it was with mixed emotions that Navro and her sisters heard news of their father's apparent suicide in 1913.

Navro started working in a candy shop at age 11. Feeling trapped in Seaside, she expected her marriage at a young age to give her the freedom she desired. The couple moved to Alaska, but her husband suffered from bipolar disorder. He was admitted to an institution and passed away five months into their marriage. He lies buried in Warrenton.

Navro then lived with her mother, her mother's brother and her sister and her sister's family before her second marriage. With her second husband, she moved to Seattle, but came back to Seaside when she became unwell during pregnancy. While Navro's daughter, Julia Maria, went on to be an accomplished actress, Hannah Nelby Navro died as a young woman of tuberculosis in 1929.

During the afternoon, graveyard visitors also were introduced to the spirits of a woman who oversaw a shoplifting ring and died in prison; an immigrant named Sam Lee, known as "The Chinaman," who faced discrimination because of his race, but was well known for his gaggle of pets that sometimes trailed him around town; and a man named James Merrifield, originally from Portland, Maine, who served under Gen. George Custer, and whose wanderlust drew him to Seaside "for just a grand time," according to Matt Hensley, who portrayed Merrifield. The deceased disappeared once again as dusk descended on the cemetery.

Climate expert expects some major flooding this winter

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Federal climatologists predict that dry conditions will generally recede over the winter in Washington state, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Northern California, providing an early and upbeat outlook on next year's water supply.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center forecast a 70 percent chance of a weak La Niña, a cooling of the ocean around the equator.

La Niña generally tilts the odds in favor of wetter and cooler winters in the northern U.S., according to the center.

It's not a sure bet, though. La Niña's influence will vary by region. The odds it stays through the winter are 55 percent.

Washington State Climatologist Nick Bond said he expects the La Niña to be too

feeble to dictate the weather.

Higher ocean temperatures in the northeast Pacific Ocean and a trend toward warmer winters also may influence the weather, he said.

Still, even a normal winter would seem cold after the past several years, Bond said.

"There's no indication that we'll have a snowpack like the disaster we had two years ago," he said. "There's no reason to be pessimistic about next summer's water supply."

A year ago, 100 percent of Washington state was classified as being in a drought. Now only 8 percent of the state is even "abnormally dry."

Bond said that even without a strong La Niña or El Niño, the state could have an eventful winter. He said current climatic conditions resemble the months before massive flooding in February 1996. "I'd be surprised if we didn't have some major flooding," he said.

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Notice of Availability of the
Northwest Training and Testing (NWT) Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) Record of Decision

The U.S. Navy has announced its decision to implement its Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1) to conduct military readiness training and testing activities primarily within existing range complexes, operating areas and testing ranges of the NWT Study Area. The Navy made its decision after carefully considering the potential impacts training and testing activities may have on the human, natural and cultural environment, as well as comments from government agencies, tribal governments and the public on the proposal and environmental analysis.

Minimizing impacts on the marine environment from training and testing is an important goal for the Navy. In its commitment to environmental protection, the Navy will implement revised mitigation measures in accordance with Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act authorizations.

The Navy's Record of Decision and Final EIS/OEIS are available online at www.NWTTEIS.com and at 21 community libraries. Please call 360-396-0965 for library locations.