

**COAST WEEKEND: LOOKING BACK, FACING FORWARD IN NEW YEAR** INSIDE

## ‘It was my heart. I couldn’t stop.’



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian  
Barb Roberts smiles for a portrait in her home on Wednesday in Astoria. Roberts has been involved with organizing the Wishing Tree charity in Astoria for over 27 years. Her Christmas tree is decorated with thank-you notes from gift recipients.

### Roberts reflects on 26 years as Wishing Tree coordinator

By ERICK BENGEL  
The Daily Astorian

On Christmas, about 850 kids from low-income families in Astoria, Svensen and Knappa had reason to feel excited.

Their parents had applied for holiday assistance through the Astoria Wishing Tree, a 30-plus-year-old program that collects and distributes Christmas gifts for local children.

And after 26 years, the program’s coordinator, Barb Roberts, announced this would be her last year leading the program.

Roberts shies away from listing her accomplishments, preferring to keep the focus on volunteers, businesses and sponsors who have helped support the Wishing Tree and its sister program, the Food Basket.

Asked what the Wishing Tree has meant to her, Roberts had trouble holding back tears. “It’s been my life,” she said.

A quarter-century is a long time to run a program whose goal is to lift people up during the holidays. What kept Roberts in it for so many years? “(The program) was my heart,” she said. “I couldn’t stop.”

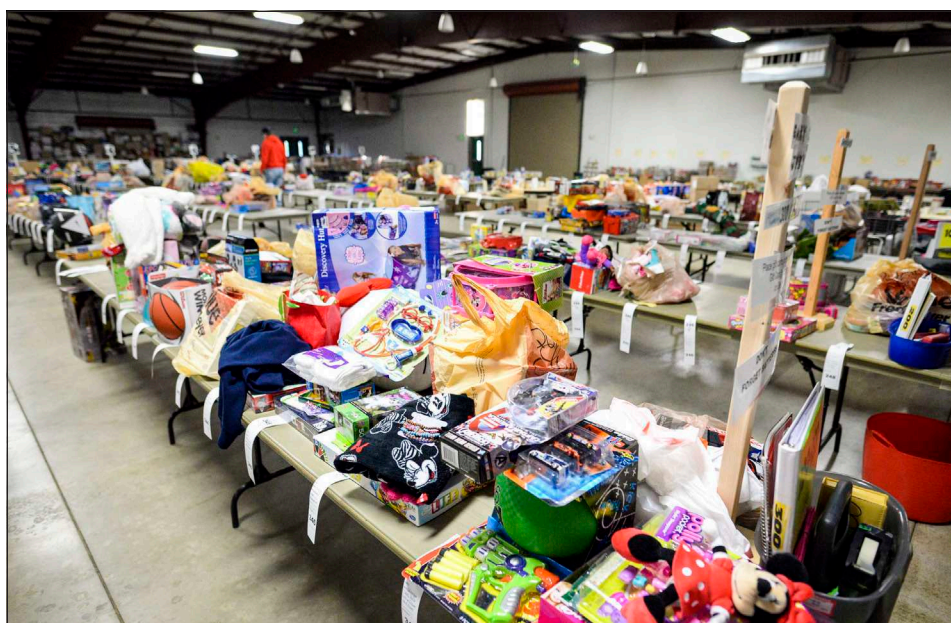
Geri Fick, a Wishing Tree volunteer from Astoria, said that, under Roberts’ management, the program became much more efficient. Roberts turned what could have been a mad, messy annual dash into a streamlined operation.

“Barb’s put her heart and soul into this program, and she’s very methodical in creating a system so that it’s pretty straightforward,” Fick said.

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Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian  
ABOVE: Wishing Tree coordinator Barb Roberts stands among the donated bikes at the Clatsop County Expo Center last year. The Wishing Tree program gave out more than 60 bikes to children around Clatsop County. The bikes come from both private and public donors. BELOW: Toys for children line tables at the Clatsop County Expo Center in 2015 as part of the Wishing Tree program.



## New year ushers in new laws statewide

Releasing sky lanterns will be a crime in 2017

By JADE MCDOWELL  
EO Media Group

The 2016 legislative session was a short one, but Oregon lawmakers had enough time to approve a handful of new laws that will go into effect Jan. 1.

Some — like a law authorizing the governing body of Tillamook County to establish wetlands — apply to a very narrow segment of the state’s population. But others will affect all Oregonians.

As always, not knowing about a new law is not a valid legal defense if you get caught breaking it.

### Criminal impersonation

Sending intimidating emails to your neighbor while pretending to be the city planner is now a crime.

Senate Bill 1567 makes it illegal to impersonate a public servant, veteran or member of the Armed Forces with the intent to cause another person injury.

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### YEAR IN REVIEW

## US election voted top news story of 2016

Top 10: Attacks, Brexit, Scalia’s death, emails

By DAVID CRARY  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The turbulent U.S. election, featuring Donald Trump’s unexpected victory over Hillary Clinton in the presidential race, was the overwhelming pick for the top news story of 2016, according to The Associated Press’ annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

The No. 2 story also was a dramatic upset — Britons’ vote to leave the European Union. Most of the other stories among the Top 10 reflected a year marked by political upheaval, terror attacks and racial divisions.

Last year, developments related to the Islamic State group were voted as the top story — the far-flung attacks claimed by the group, and the intensifying global effort to crush it.

The first AP top-stories poll was conducted in 1936, when editors chose the abdication of Britain’s King Edward VIII.

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## Biking advocate calls Cannon Beach home

New chamber marketer has a passion for racing bikes

By LYRA FONTAINE  
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — While growing up in Seattle and living in Portland, Matthew Weintraub entertained the idea of living in a small, remote town — in the mountains or on the coast — where he could have a personal connection with his community.



In July, this idea became a reality when Weintraub moved to Cannon Beach for a job as destination marketing manager at the city’s Chamber of Commerce.

“It’s been a fast half of the year so far,” he said.

The 7-minute bike ride to work, good coffee and small-town feel are just a few things

that Weintraub enjoys about Cannon Beach.

“It’s really nice being able to walk around and people know your name and ask you how you’ve been, not because you’re important but because we’re all here and we all care about our neighbors,” he said.

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Submitted Photo  
Matthew Weintraub, the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce destination marketing manager, moved to town in July.