

U.S. COAST GUARD MEMORIAL

‘For your tomorrow, we gave our today’

Ceremony honors Coast Guardsmen who have lost their lives in the Pacific Northwest

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

ILWACO, Wash. — Gordon Huggins, a retired electrician’s mate with the U.S. Coast Guard, remembers the night a nosebleed saved his life.

On Jan. 12, 1961, Huggins was aboard the Coast Guard’s 52-foot motor lifeboat Triumph, lost in rough seas along with five of his fellow crewmen. He was the lone survivor in a tragedy that was the worst of several for the Coast Guard in the Pacific Northwest over the past 71 years.

Huggins and other current and former Coast Guardsmen, friends and family gathered Saturday at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, perched on the cliffs above the mouth of the Columbia River, to pay tribute to the lifesavers who have given their lives over the years.

Triumph tragedy

The calm waters below the memorial belied the heavy seas that have helped shape the entrance’s reputation as “The Graveyard of the Pacific.” Huggins remembered a much different scene when the Triumph reached Peacock Spit, motoring out to rescue two Ilwaco, Washington, fishermen aboard the crabber Mermaid who had lost a rudder.

“By the time we got out into here, we were going through 30-foot breakers,” he said. “On the way out, for some reason, I got a nosebleed. The coxswain told me ‘Go down below and see if you can get rid of it.’”

See **CEREMONY**, Page 7A



Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Kaitlin Florez places a memorial wreath into the Pacific Ocean below the North Head Lighthouse Saturday. The Coast Guard held an annual ceremony to honor the guardians who have died in the Pacific Northwest.

Crew members from the U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment manned the rails Saturday during a wreath-laying ceremony and flyover below the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Cape Disappointment State Park.

Petty Officer 1st Class Levi Read



Council talks goals for next fiscal year

Library remodel, Heritage Square are top priorities

By **ERICK BENGEL**
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council wants the public to know three things about the Astoria Library:

The city will renovate the existing library at 10th and Exchange streets rather than look to build elsewhere. To pay for the project, the city will use funds and grants already available, plus whatever additional money can be raised, without issuing a bond sale. And the design will be one that serves the community’s needs for many decades.

Nailing down the library’s future is among the council’s top priorities for the next fiscal year, along with launching a redevelopment of Heritage Square, increasing housing units and stabilizing the Parks and Recreation Department budget.

On Friday, the City Council held a nearly nine-hour goal-setting session — facilitated by Albany City Manager Wes Hare — where they drafted a set of goals for the council to pursue. City staff will soon bring the goals before the council for discussion and public comment. The council will adopt the final goals at a subsequent meeting.

See **COUNCIL**, Page 7A

Linn County makes the rounds on timber suit

Port will discuss options

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria will decide Tuesday whether to take part in the Linn County timber lawsuit after meeting with a lawyer for the plaintiffs.

The Port is one of about 130 taxing districts in Oregon — 30 in Clatsop County — named as plaintiffs in the \$1.4 billion class-action lawsuit brought by Linn County against the state last year.

Linn County was named the representative in the lawsuit for all of the involved counties and taxing districts. Representatives from the county and its legal team have been visiting multiple taxing districts in advance of the Jan. 25 deadline for the agencies to decide whether to remain involved.

Clatsop County voted to opt out of the suit last week.

The lawsuit, partially funded by timber companies, claims the state breached a contract to maximize timber revenues on more than 700,000 acres of land deeded by 15 counties. Linn County claimed the state has

See **TIMBER SUIT**, Page 7A

Astoria actor is empowered to entertain

Autistic man uses acting to express himself

Like all the actors in his latest Astoria community drama production, Justin Germond was asked to write a brief personal biography for the program.

The other eight cast members who appear in “All in the Timing,” a Partners for the PAC fundraiser, submitted three or four sentences to describe their real-life personas and list their favorite prior roles.

Germond went further. He



opened up his heart.

His biography, which filled two hand-written pages, poured out his lifelong struggle with a condition that means his brain appears differently wired from many around him.

“Diagnosed at an early age with autism (or Asperger’s syndrome), Justin Germond exhibited some traits of intelligence but he lacked most forms of social behavior generally shown by children

his age,” he wrote, describing himself in the third person, as requested.

“He failed to understand certain emotions, and thus found great difficulty in relating to others as well as not knowing how to respond to certain situations. Despite such drawbacks, Justin had a thirst for knowledge concerning subjects of his interest, and a love of humor.”

‘Different person’

Germond describes his enjoyment onstage as a “behavioral 180-degree turn,” an opportunity to morph from quiet and shy into “a different person entirely.”

“It’s the chance to be someone else,” he said. “That’s the allure for me — and I don’t have any stage fright.”

The 28-year-old Astoria man attributes much of his success to special education programs and speech classes. He is eager to credit his mother, Becca Germond, who “never gave up on him.” She said her frustration with the lack of educational support in his early years led her to homeschool her son for a while.

He made his debut in third grade playing a rooster that had been attacked by a fork. When the Missoula



Patrick Webb/
For The Daily Astorian
Justin Germond

See **GERMOND**, Page 7A

