

Ceremony: 'We fight a war every day'

Continued from Page 1A

Shortly after handing a tow line to a crew member above and closing the watertight hatch, he said, the boat rolled onto its side.

"The next thing, she was upside down, and the ceiling was the floor," he said. "I kept waiting for it to keep going, because everybody had told us, 'Oh, it's a re-rightable boat.' Well, it hadn't been built that way."

When the boat finally flipped upright, Huggins said, the rest of the crew was gone. Huggins, struggling to speak because of the memory, said he held onto the boat for more than an hour before it flipped again, sending him into the icy waters.

"I knew I was gone at that time, because once you're out there in that water out there in wintertime, you're only good for maybe 15, 20 minutes," he said. "All we were wearing was just plain dungarees and a foul weather jacket. We didn't have the equipment like they have nowadays."

Huggins said he was hit by something and passed out, but eventually saw a light and was saved from the surf by two Coast Guardsmen from North Head Lighthouse.

Of his fellow crewman — coxswain John Culp, engineer Joseph Petrin, seaman apprentice Gordon Sussex and boatswain's mates John Hoban and Ralph Mace — Huggins said Culp was the only other body ever found. The Triumph went down as the worst Coast Guard disaster in the Pacific Northwest.

Going to war, coming back

Looking at the calm seas, Huggins said, someone might not notice how bad it can get.



Gordon Huggins, left, is the lone survivor from the 52-foot motor lifeboat Triumph, which was lost 56 years ago, along with five of his fellow crewman. Holding Huggins' hand is Jeff Rusiecki, a retired Coast Guardsman who with Huggins began a memorial to those guardians who have died in the Pacific Northwest.

"We fight a war every day that we go out in those boats," he said. "We may not be having bullets shot at us, but we are still fighting mother nature. She's out there every day, and we have to watch ourselves every day we go out."

Twenty Coast Guardsmen have lost their lives on rescues and in training in the Pacific Northwest, including four aboard a 36-foot motor lifeboat in 1946, five on the Triumph, three during night navigation training on a 41-foot utility boat, one in a Coast Guard aircraft in 1981, three during a 1997 rescue of a sailing boat on Washington's Quillayute River Bar and three when a Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Sitka went down on a return trip from Astoria.

Adm. Mark Butt is commander of the Coast Guard's 13th District covering the Pacific Northwest. On Jan. 11,

1991, he was a command duty officer at Air Station Astoria when one Coast Guardsman and two mariners died during the rescue of the 75-foot trawler Sea King in rough seas.

Butt was a pilot aboard an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter assisting in the rescue. While lowering a swimmer with water pumps to the Sea King, he said, the hoist cable wrapped around the mast of the boat as it unexpectedly turned. The cable eventually snapped, sending the swimmer to the deck and the cable snapping up into the helicopter's rotor head.

"We immediately had severe vibrations, and the book said land or ditch immediately," Butt said. "In that sea state, to land or ditch immediately would have meant several people on that helicopter would be dead today. So I said a small prayer, bee-lined back over this way and managed to get the air-

craft on deck before the rotor head gave out."

The Sea King eventually capsized and sank. A Coast Guardsman and two crew members in the pilothouse went down with the vessel. Butt said he still has nightmares about what could have gone wrong with the helicopter. He the three lives lost trying to save the Sea King were too much. Today, he said, the Coast Guard still offers the same lifesaving service, but thinks more about the risk to its own service members.

Capt. William Timmons, commander of Sector Columbia River, said it is the responsibility of the living to come together and remember those guardians who gave their lives. He ended with a quote from British poet John Maxwell Edmonds: "When you go home, tell them of us, and say, 'For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'"

Germond: Has worked with many directors

Continued from Page 1A

Children's Theatre visited Astoria to create plays with North Coast kids, his mother signed him up.

Later, at Knappa High School, he became a stalwart of the Thespian Club, garnering applause for stage productions and for creating videos, including for his health class, which tapped into his love of Monty Python-style humor.

"He is very creative and has a lot of potential," said Becca Germond, who lives in Hammond. "His love for theater has been his strong point."

Childhood challenges

When Justin Germond auditioned for Astor Street Opry Company some years ago, he shared nothing of the challenges that had dominated his childhood, recalled Judith Niland, longtime director and producer.

She encouraged him in "Shanghaied in Astoria." "I sensed that something was different," she said, remembering early rehearsals. "He needed a different form of communication style. At first, the director, Nate (Bucholz), was frustrated, so I kept watching. I thought perhaps he was hard of hearing, so I would look at him and he would lock on to what I was saying and do what was needed."

As others developed a similar rapport, Germond was cast in two lead roles, Max Krooke, Jr., in "Scrooged in Astoria," a performance his current director, Edward James, described



Justin Germond, left, appears in a comic restaurant scene with Gigi Chadwick in the Partners for the PAC play "All in the Timing" in Astoria, which concludes this weekend. The 28-year-old Astoria man was diagnosed with autism at an early age and has used acting as a way to express himself by portraying characters who are different from himself.

as "terrific," and Meriwether in the company's "The Real Lewis and Clark Story."

"I had a really strong feeling that he would be good — and he was," Niland said. "Now he is a pretty strong actor and has worked with numerous directors."

Markus Brown directed Germond in a couple of shows and said he benefited from Niland's advice on how to channel his enthusiasm. "He is a very smart young man. He understands things — he gets complicated concepts," Brown said. "In his exuberance to perform, he would get carried away and you would have to dial that back a bit."

The play

This weekend, Germond appears in three of the six scenes in the play by New York

comedy writer David Ives. It opened Friday and concludes its run at the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center with three upcoming shows Friday through Sunday.

Although the scenes all find humor in communication issues, they are starkly different. Germond portrays three roles: a man trapped in a weird time warp, a construction worker with an unusual secret, and a chimpanzee locked in a cage who is ordered to type "Hamlet."

He shrugs off the challenge. "Each one needs a different mindset," he said. "It's giving the director what they want in a way that embodies the character."

James, the director, recalled positive experiences directing him in "Murder at Checkmate Manor" and "The Foreigner,"

in which Germond's apparently pleasant clergyman character was hiding a dark secret. He acknowledges developing this production has been challenging, because Germond's three characters are so distinct.

"I picked him to do the show because he has shown me that he has a good ear and an agile, strong voice and can be directed to grasp a nuanced character," James said. "In fact, he is one of the quicker members of the cast to understand adjustments I ask him to make in line readings."

Thrived in drama

Lloyd Bowler, who retired as Knappa High School's special education teacher in 2008, recalls Germond from years ago as a pleasant student who thrived in drama.

Speaking generally, he said theater has positive benefits because it offers a framework for emotions. "Autistic people have a hard time operating without structure," Bowler said. "In drama productions, they are portraying emotions, they have to be verbal and expressive. These are things that most autistic people are not ... but they have got the script."

For Astor Street's Niland, Germond's continued stage success is not a surprise. "I understand how the theater empowers people who are different or have a learning disability," she said.

— Patrick Webb

The writer appears in a separate scene in the play "All in the Timing" at the CCC PAC in Astoria 7 p.m. Friday 7 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
Renovating the Astoria Library tops the goals of the Astoria City Council next fiscal year.

Council: Library's roof needs regular inspections and maintenance

Continued from Page 1A

The library, a critical concern during Friday's session, has been a divisive topic among locals.

Aware that the nearly 50-year-old building is worn out and cannot support the needs of modern library users, some residents thought it best to upgrade the facility, a specimen of Brutalist architecture, while others hoped to construct a new library at Heritage Square, a project that could require a bond measure.

In July, after months of public debate, the council voted against the Heritage Square proposal and tossed out other expensive proposals, like expanding into the vacant Waldorf Hotel. The council ultimately directed city staff to devise a plan for renovating the current building with money on hand.

Councilor Cindy Price noted Friday, however, that the council's motion was "looser" than it probably should have been. Members of the public, she said, had become confused about what the council would be willing to do.

The council made it clear that Heritage Square, or any other new site, wasn't an option. "We're no longer going to look for another property," Mayor Arline LaMear said.

To get the process underway, staff will work closely with the library foundation to estimate a budget, basing the figure on city funds and the foundation's fundraising forecast. The city would then hire an architect to produce design concepts for a building that the money — \$2 million to \$3 million, say — could buy.

Councilor Zetty Nemlowill said she wants Library Director Jimmy Pearson, and the library foundation, to work closely with the city as the project goes forward.

Though the council has not fixed a deadline for completing the renovation, City Manager Brett Estes said he would hope the project could be finished by 2020.

LaMear said the foundation feels a sense of urgency, particularly because the roof needs regular inspections and maintenance. While the renovation comes together, Estes said, "it's recognized that we may have to spend some money to keep patching it over this time."

Housing at Heritage Square

The City Council's decision to remodel the aging structure comes with a bonus, Price pointed out: The library issue is now uncoupled from the issue of reviving Heritage Square, the former Safeway parking lot that is now a yawning pit in the downtown core.

"I mean, talk about a blight on the city," Price said.

The council's tentative goal for Heritage Square is to redevelop the area

through a public-private partnership in a way that will include housing for residents. The move would indicate a council serious about confronting Astoria's severe housing shortage.

The city originally bought the property from Safeway to have control over the centrally located site. Before Heritage Square became an option for new library grounds, community discussion centered on whether the parcel could be transformed into a public park or plaza, or a mixed-use setting. Estes said some talk mentioned housing units, but questions lingered as to how that could be achieved.

Nemlowill said she believes the city cannot afford to redevelop the site alone, or that Parks and Recreation — an already over-extended department — should be handed another site to look after.

The council agreed that the city has an acute need for more housing units, and adding some at Heritage Square would, Nemlowill said, contribute to the vitality of downtown — and to the tax rolls.

Councilor Tom Brownson said, "I think residents need to know that we're looking at this from a really, I think, pragmatic point of view of what we can do and what we can't do — what the city can do and can't do — in the next five years based on income and revenue."

Other goals

The council also plans to:

- Increase Astoria's housing stock for residents by implementing the provisions listed in the city's affordable housing study. The council said the city should incentivize the rehabilitation of derelict and vacant residential properties for long-term housing.

- Make Parks and Recreation more manageable by having the department focus on the city's "most valued programs and places."

LaMear said she believes this will include selling less important properties under the department's care. "The parks department has too much to take care of," she said.

In addition, the council will work to implement the parks master plan, including the creation of a special master plan for Ocean View Cemetery, a city-maintained cemetery located in Warrenton.

- Enhance community awareness on disaster resiliency, and explore relocating public safety facilities outside the tsunami inundation zone.

- Develop a master plan for downtown parking that increases parking options and addresses pedestrian safety.

- Complete the Urban Core area of the city's Riverfront Vision Plan.

- Explore options for reducing expenses and boosting revenues.

Timber suit: By doing nothing, districts remain in suit

Continued from Page 1A

cost the counties \$35 million a year in revenue since 1998, when the Board of Forestry adopted a rule focusing more on salmon and wildlife habitat.

The counties and taxing districts involved could receive a sizable settlement if the lawsuit goes the plaintiffs' way. Some fear the lawsuit could lead to a change in rules allowing more logging on state land and potentially higher taxes to finance a settlement.

Making the rounds

Linn County Commis-

sioner Roger Nyquist confirmed that he and John DiLorenzo, a lawyer for the county in the lawsuit, met with the Clatsop Community College Board Tuesday to talk about the suit. The college's board will decide Jan. 24 whether to remain involved.

The Port scheduled a closed executive session before its Tuesday meeting to discuss Tuesday meeting to discuss "litigation filed or likely to be filed." Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, confirmed that DiLorenzo will meet with the Port Commission Tuesday. Afterwards, the commission will meet in public and decide

whether to remain a plaintiff.

Many parties

In his motion for class-action certification, DiLorenzo identified 15 counties and at least 130 taxing districts statewide receiving revenues from state timberlands. In Clatsop County, they included agencies overseeing schools, firefighting, police, health care, transportation and water supplies.

County Manager Cameron Moore said that of the 30 districts identified in the county, five were automatically opted out by the county's decision. The other 25 will make their

own decisions. By doing nothing, they remain in the lawsuit.

Moore said some of the bigger players, in terms of revenue, are the county, Seaside School District, Jewell School District, the college and the Port.

Jewell Superintendent Alice Hunsaker said she has talked with DiLorenzo, and that the school district will decide this week what to do. Seaside Superintendent Sheila Roley could not be reached for comment, nor could lawyers for the state on whether they have planned any visits with the counties and taxing districts.