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ONE DOLLAR

Astoria man arrested in uncle's murder



Christopher Eric Johns

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An Astoria man accused of murdering his uncle was arrested late Thursday afternoon.

Christopher Eric Johns, 45, was arrested by the Portland Police Bureau at a hotel in the

city. Johns is being charged with murder and fourth-degree assault in connection to the death of Ronald Boudreau, 66, of Warrenton. He allegedly assaulted a woman near the time of Boudreau's death, according to a court document.

Deputies responded to a report of a dead man at Boudreau's resi-

dence on U.S. Highway 101 Business at about 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Johns has faced numerous felony and misdemeanor charges in Clatsop County dating back to 1992. He has been convicted of menacing, theft, criminal mischief, attempt to commit a felony and burglary. He also has been

convicted twice for driving under the influence of intoxicants and assault.

Lorelie Beckwith of Brownsmead said she lived with Boudreau in Warrenton in the early 1980s. She said they remained good friends for the rest of his life.

Beckwith said he was a fun-loving man with a big smile and a lot of friends. He played drums and was a part of some small local bands, she said.

"He'd always give you a hug — a big, heartfelt hug," Beckwith said. "It totally shocked me. I still can't believe it."

IN LEWIS AND CLARK, THE GRANGE IS SOCIAL HUB

A link between the past and future endures

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

More than a century after it was built, a grange that served as a social hub for generations of Lewis and Clark-area farmers appeared to be on its last dance.

Early last year, the organization managing the Netel Grange, a nearly 107-year-old hall, had just \$45 left in the bank, Grange Master Gary Sunderland said.

Membership in recent decades, along with the accompanying \$50 annual dues, has dropped to 15 families after a 100-family peak in the 1930s. Ninety percent of the dues go to the larger Oregon State Grange.

But the grange's financial situation has become more stable since a 25-student preschool called Salmonberry Hill began operating there. Due to the school's rent payments since the start of the academic year in September, the grange now has more than \$1,200 in funds, Sunderland said.

"It was just serendipity," Sunderland said of the school's interest in the grange. "We're on the verge of bankruptcy, but at least we're not bankrupt."

Social functions

Since 1910, the Netel Grange has held regular social functions and membership meetings.

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Grange Master Gary Sunderland points to historic memorabilia on the wall at the Netel Grange. The gathering place has struggled to survive in recent decades.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Old photographs and paintings of the Netel Grange remain on the walls.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
The Netel Grange is almost 107 years old.

INSIDE

Tenants, landlords debate rent restrictions
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Tripped up over sidewalks

Seaside affordable housing project in doubt

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Developers behind an affordable housing project in Seaside have warned that a potential city demand for sidewalks during the first phase of construction would be a deal killer.

The owners of a 15-acre parcel known as Blue Heron Pointe hope to put 45 units of affordable single-family homes on the property. The homes would be intended for workforce housing and priced at under \$300,000.

But with a Planning Commission request for the installation of sidewalks during the project's initial phase, Ritchie Development

Corp. owners Bruce and Max Ritchie said this week the price tag would be prohibitive and force them to abandon their plans.

The Ritchies, who have owned the property for 23 years, went before the commission in February requesting approval for the project at the corner of South Wahanna Road and Avenue S.

The area is zoned for residential medium density, requiring each lot area be a minimum of 5,000 square feet or 7,500 square feet for a duplex. The Ritchies had considered a higher-density plan, but said they were told the city did not allow "spot zoning" for residential building projects.

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R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Max Ritchie on the site of Blue Heron Pointe, a 45-lot subdivision.

Pump it up

Warrenton's sewer system project nears completion

By ERICK BENDEL
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Construction on a long-planned Warrenton sewer system project, designed to relieve pressure on an old downtown pump station and save money on maintenance and electricity costs, is about half finished.

The city's sewage flows many different routes to the wastewater treatment plant,

but the majority of it runs through a single pump station at Southeast Third Street and South Main Avenue.

The waste matter merges with groundwater that infiltrates the sewage system through leaky pipes. Rainwater also enters the system through manholes and misconnected pipes, such as downspouts — a process called "inflow."

This means that one aging pump station is running virtually around the clock, rather than once or twice a hour like most pump stations. During winter storms, the station will run almost nonstop, City Engineer Collin Stelzig said.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

City of Warrenton officials and construction workers inspect the site of the new pump station being constructed east of downtown on Wednesday.

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