

Power blips draw metal balloon warnings

Firefighters see more risk in illegal fireworks

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The city's Fourth of July celebration in 2015 saw plenty of fireworks, but one piece of pyrotechnics went awry.

Sheila Holden, the Pacific Power spokeswoman at the time, called it "Mylargate." When a metal-coated balloon made contact with a Pacific Power substation, sparks flew and the South County went dark for hours, disrupting celebrations, picnics and parades.

More than 8,000 customers were affected by a metallic-skinned helium balloon that got away, according to Pacific Power. Crews found "unmistakable red, white and blue Mylar shreds" when doing repairs.

The balloon from a nearby celebration caused a main substation transformer to short circuit near Seaside Factory Outlet Center. Other equipment was also damaged on nearby poles.

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Tone softens in dam feud

Warrenton, water district want final resolution

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Six months after declaring an emergency over the Eighth Street Dam, Warrenton has toned down brazen talk of ownership and legal threats while waiting for federal advice on what to do next.

The city asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December whether the small, 54-year-old dam over the Skipanon River should be restored for flood control. The city also wanted the Army Corps to investigate whether the Skipanon Water Control District, which has managed the dam since it was built with the help of the federal government in 1963, improperly removed tide gates on the aging structure.

Warrenton had threatened to sue the water district to take control of the dam and reinstall the tide gates. A Portland attorney hired by the city initially claimed Warrenton owned the dam, then, after more research, described it as a federal asset integral to the city's levee system.

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LANE COUNTY'S EMERY WINS MISS OREGON

CROWNING GLORY



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Harley Emery, left, is crowned Miss Oregon 2017 by Miss Oregon 2016 Alexis Mather at the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program Saturday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. More photos online at DailyAstorian.com



Miss Oregon 2016 Alexis Mather accepts roses from members of the audience as she takes the last walk of her reign during Saturday's Miss Oregon Scholarship Program in Seaside.

By KAELIA NEAL
The Daily Astorian

After waiting in suspense next to the top-five contestants, Harley Emery of Lane County was "in shock" to hear her name called as Miss Oregon 2017.

"I'm so excited. I'm just so thrilled," Emery said Saturday during the 70th annual Miss Oregon pageant. "I stood there for a second thinking, 'Wait, what just happened?'"

Emery said she has competed in pageants for five years. She will represent Oregon at the Miss America pageant in September in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Twenty contestants competed in swimwear, talent, interview and other categories to highlight their personal successes and beliefs.

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Gym rat drawn back to the North Coast

Former MMA fighter devotes energy to fitness



Ira Evansen has devoted his life to fitness.

A school dropout, who was briefly homeless as a young man, Evansen found his confidence as a gym rat, testing himself through taekwondo and mixed martial arts.

Evansen, now 34, owns Valhalla Alpha Fit Gym in Gearhart, where classes such as powerlifting, boxing, wrestling and Zumba are offered.

"Fitness is a large pie and we cover a large part of it,"

Evansen said.

The gym has classes Monday through Friday, though there is 24-hour access for members. On Wednesdays, Spanish Spoken Alpha Fit allows people to train with Spanish translation. Children as young as 6 can also train.

A Cannon Beach native and an only child, fitness has always been a big part of Evansen's life. "When I was younger, I was always surfing," he said.

But the road to Evansen's success was not always smooth. He dropped out of school in the seventh grade, and ran around with an older group of boys that led to some trouble. Eventually, when Evansen turned 18, he began working at Cleanline Surf Shop in Seaside.

Evansen said he decided to make a bold move and abruptly fled to California with his best friend where they had no place to stay. After about eight months of being homeless, Evansen decided enough was enough. He left the streets and moved to Seattle with his father, where he was introduced

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Kaelia Neal/The Daily Astorian

Ira Evansen racks the barbell after an overhead squat at Valhalla Alpha Fit Gym.



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