



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Kimberly Gibbs checks on the progress of her students during a resistance-stretching class at the RiversZen Studio. The class is designed to help veterans cope with the physical and mental effects of their service.

STRETCH, GROW, RECOVER

Stretching class for veterans helps ease stress, pain

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

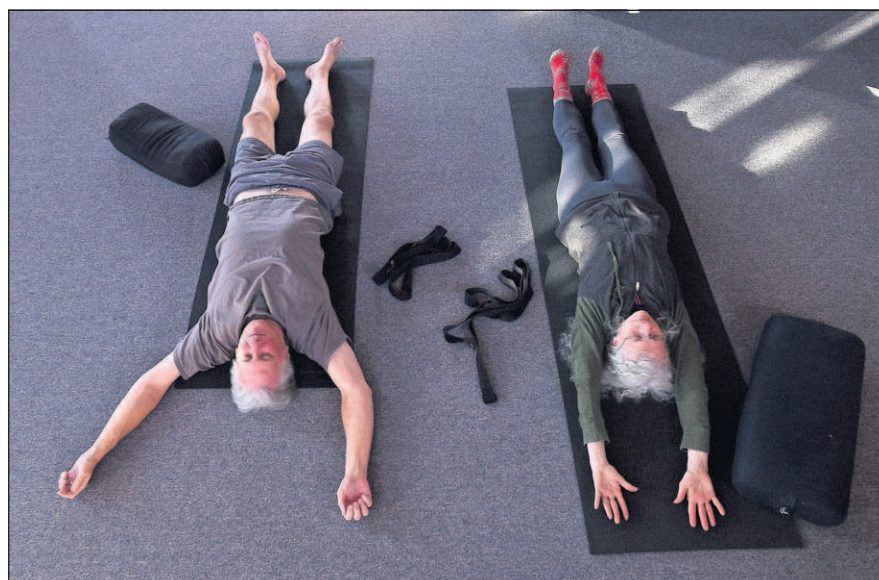
A handful of people in an intimate riverfront studio gradually stretched their muscles under the guidance of soft-toned instructors, as quiet music filled the air. Astoria is thousands of miles away from the war-torn Middle East, but the room in that moment felt even farther.

Christopher, a veteran who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and his wife Kimberly Gibbs, a Ki-Hara stretching instructor, held the first in what they hope will become a regular resistance stretching class offered to military personnel for free. The couple's hourlong class made its debut Tuesday night at RiversZen Studio on 31st Street.

Gibbs was a U.S. Marine Corps staff sergeant who saw combat in multiple deployments from 2001 to 2014. An infantryman, Gibbs' muscles endured stress as he was required to carry heavy equipment.

He recalls eight close calls involving improvised explosive devices that detonated near him. He usually was inside a vehicle, but slight concussions were common.

"I was definitely rocked really



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Yoga students practice stretching and relaxation techniques at the RiversZen Studio in Astoria on Tuesday. Ki-Hara, one of the classes offered at the studio, is specifically designed for veterans and first responders.

good," he said.

The final explosion caused a temporary blackout, a headache and back and neck pain that persists years later. He also copes with post-traumatic stress disorder from his multiple deployments.

Recovering

The couple moved from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina to Astoria in 2014 to be close to members of Kimberly's family. Christopher, who is not usually inclined to seek medical treatment, instead tried, as much as possible, to work with his wife on a resis-

tance-stretching program.

Ki-Hara forces participants to move their arms and legs in rotational and diagonal patterns. By contracting and lengthening muscles at the same time, the techniques emphasize both strength and flexibility to make participants feel less tense and more energetic. Professional athletes such as Russian Olympic Gold Medal gymnast Nastia Liukin and Major League Baseball player Jayson Werth have utilized the techniques.

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Warrenton dings Astoria over grave conditions

Commissioner calls Ocean View 'shameful'

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton is in "shameful" condition, a Warrenton city commissioner said Tuesday night, and Warrenton will contact Astoria about what can be done to clean it up.

Astoria owns the cemetery in Warrenton and maintains the grounds through its Parks and Recreation Department, which has wrestled with maintenance and staffing issues. Families who purchased plots in the cemetery for their loved ones were promised perpetual care, and many have complained over the past few years about weeds and long grass.

"I typically don't like the idea of getting involved in someone else's business," Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer said, "but it is our business because it's in our city."

City commissioners decided to add a discussion of the cemetery's condition to their agenda after Commissioner Mark Baldwin mentioned it during his report at the start of Tuesday's meeting.

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Providence Seaside weathers cutback gale

Higher costs, lower subsidies stress system

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Providence Seaside Hospital, the city's largest employer with 375 employees, is bracing for changes amid a changing health care landscape.

Members of the hospital's corporate office responded to comments after an Oregonian report of "aggressive cost-cutting and layoffs" by Providence Health & Services this week.

For Oregon-based caregivers — including those at Providence Seaside Hospital — there are no planned layoffs, wrote Providence Health & Services Regional Chief Executive Officer Dave Underriner in a letter to employees this week.

"That doesn't mean we will not continue our regular stewardship of business, making decisions that can change employment for some caregivers, but we are not having Oregon-wide layoffs," Underriner said. "Financially in Oregon, we are doing OK and meeting our budget."



Dave Underriner

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Law keeps park help from being tripped up

Workers get immunity from some lawsuits

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

City workers in charge of maintaining public parks will get immunity from liability under a new state law.

The law, signed by Gov. Kate Brown in June, was one of the top priorities of the League of Oregon Cities for the legislative session. "It's exactly what we asked for,"

said Scott Winkels, intergovernmental relations associate with the league.

A previous version of the statute appeared to leave city employees legally vulnerable while using city parks — if they tripped on a crack along the Astoria Riverwalk, for instance.

Last year, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that while cities have immunity from liability on recreational lands they own, city workers or volunteers responsible for maintaining public parks do not.

The ruling stemmed from

a review of a 2009 lawsuit brought against Portland by a legally blind jogger. She sued the city and city maintenance workers after she stepped into a hole at a city park and injured herself.

The Supreme Court maintained that the Oregon Public Use of Lands Act, which shields from liability public and private property owners who allow public recreation on their lands for free, did not specifically extend this immunity to employees — a worrying development for cities across the state.

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Erosion and storm damage is visible along the Astoria Riverwalk in December 2015.

