

Aquatic Center may close if park funds not found

Adult and youth sports programs could also end

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Astoria could close the Aquatic Center and eliminate all youth and adult athletic programs by the end of August unless the City Council

approves new fees and tax increases to finance park operations and maintenance.

City staff is recommending a \$3 parks and recreation fee on water customers and an increase in the lodging tax from 9 percent to 11 percent to generate \$563,540 a year for parks. The Parks and Recreation Department says it requires a minimum of \$425,004 to implement "the life raft scenario." As the term implies, the life raft is an emer-

gency solution, a way to stay afloat for now on a turbulent budgetary ocean.

The City Council will hear the staff recommendation at a meeting tonight.

"Coming to that conclusion was one of the most challenging parts of this process," Angela Cosby, the director of the Parks and Recreation Department, said of potentially closing the Aquatic Center and eliminating sports programs.

The Aquatic Center, financed by a voter-approved bond and fundraising in 1996, was part of the redevelopment of the city's eastern gateway. The pools are popular with recreational swimmers from across the region and are used by swim teams for training, but maintenance costs are significant. Youth and adult athletic programs place demands on city staff time and resources.

City staff cautioned that closing the Aquatic Center and eliminat-

ing the sports programs should not be viewed as a temporary fix, but a decision that would have long-term effects financially if the city ever tried to revive the services in the future.

"Ideally, council will approve a funding-mechanism scenario that will provide the needed resources to continue sustaining all service levels," Cosby said.

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SHOP THE DOCK

TOURS IN WARRENTON SHOWCASE SEAFOOD



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Community members participate in the first "Shop the Dock" tour in Warrenton on Friday put on by Oregon Sea Grant. The event, which included a visit to the Warrenton Marina followed by a tour of the Skipanon Brand Seafood processing facility, was created as a way to let residents know what the local industry has to offer the consumer.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The first ever "Shop the Dock" tours in Clatsop County highlighted Warrenton's seafood offerings.

Despite the area's long history of fishing and seafood processing — and even though the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean are right there — how to actually lay hands on freshly caught seafood can be a mystery for many residents without ties to the commercial fishing industry.

The tour Friday was intended to show people what's available and where.

"I'm glad to know that we can do it," said Lisa Reid, owner of Lucy's Books in downtown Astoria. She and her husband can their own tuna, but have long been interested in buying directly from fishermen.

Plus, she added: "It's a field trip, and I'm always up for a field trip."

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Participants in the Shop the Dock event in Warrenton on Friday tour the Skipanon Seafood processing facility after a visit to the local marina. The event was held to inform the public about how to purchase local seafood from local merchants.

SHOP THE DOCK

The next tours will occur on Sept. 15 at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Each tour lasts about 90 minutes. Space is limited. Sea Grant asks those planning to attend to call the Oregon Sea Grant office at 503-325-8573 to register at least three days in advance.

The tours meet in the Warrenton Marina at 550 N.E. Harbor Place. Organizers recommend attendees wear comfortable walking shoes and arrive 15 minutes early.

Uniontown's Mary Todd's Workers Bar finds a buyer

Astoria author Kirk to take over in September

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

Mary Todd, the owner of Mary Todd's Workers Bar & Grill, said she has agreed to sell the Uniontown business and property to Diana Kirk, an Astoria resident and author.

Kirk wrote on Facebook that she signed the papers Friday afternoon. Todd will remain the owner until Sept. 13.

Todd, who put the property up for sale last year, originally listed it for \$595,000 but ended up dropping the price, she said.

The tavern — a landmark of the Uniontown Historic District — is an iconic watering hole and gathering place known for campfires, barbecues, homestyle food, "yuccas" (a regionally famous vodka drink with lemon juice and simple syrup) and "Meat Bingo," where customers can win hunks of packaged meat to prepare at home.



Mary Todd



Diana Kirk

The 'Workers Tavern'

In addition to the tavern, the historic building houses five apartments and boasts a backyard beer garden.

"Workers was the very first place I started hanging out in Astoria when I first came here," said Kirk, who moved to Astoria from Portland within the last couple of years. "I hung out there a lot, and I just kind of listened to people's stories, and I got to know a lot of people that work here."

She loves that the bar is called a workers tavern, she said, because "there's really hard-working people in this town, and they all hang out there, and I have a deep respect for that."

That is why "I really want to keep the bar exactly the way it is," she said. She plans to keep the ambiance but change the name to "Workers Tavern."

Her contract with Todd stipulates that Kirk will keep the staff, a provision very important to Todd, who said the employees have "been so loyal, and they're family to me."

Changes

Kirk plans to hand over the apartment

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A visit to Nell's house in south Seaside

Meeting with a style maven

SEASIDE — "I've been told that in 1938 this building was a grocery store that supplied the guest cabins in the neighborhood," Nell Hutchison said, speaking of her charming home in south Seaside where she's lived since 1998.

Hutchison, who arrived in Seaside by way of Sacramento and who grew up in Minnesota, has been a well-dressed figure in the neighborhood for 20 years. She is a regular patron of the Pacific Way Bakery, known for her droll humor,



her poetry, and her head-turning outfits.

"I worked for the Department of Justice from 1955 to 1992," Hutchison said. "I was an administrator in criminal-justice record keeping. I had between 50 and 80 people, including supervisors, reporting to me."

While at the Department of Justice, she took her college degree, first falling in love with the poetry of T.S. Eliot

and then majoring in English and writing poetry. She said it was the tumultuous '70s that inspired her to write. She wrote about family, her frustrations as a woman, and the concept of vulnerability. In 1996, the Sacramento publisher Laverne Frith published her memoir, "When I Was A Child in Minnesota."

Collections

These days Hutchison occupies herself taking pictures, writing haiku and playing pinochle.

Her house is full of collections. She is a great collector of ceramics, china, dolls, figurines and cut glass. An entire

blue-painted room has been given over to things reminding her of Seaside: shells, sand dollars, images of sea birds and African violets. "The secret to keeping them is light, but not too much heat," she said.

Her color-coordinated wardrobe draws people in.

Hutchison has a wall of caps and handbags in her tidy bedroom, as well as color-coordinated drawers of gloves and socks and little purses. A large box of delicious vintage costume jewelry is arranged by brooches, earrings and bangles. Her closet is turned over seasonally. Purple is her



Eve Marx/For The Daily Astorian
Nell Hutchison at her Seaside home.

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