

# Two 911 dispatchers get awards for outstanding performance

The Daily Astorian

An Astoria 911 dispatcher has been recognized as the top telecommunicator in the state.

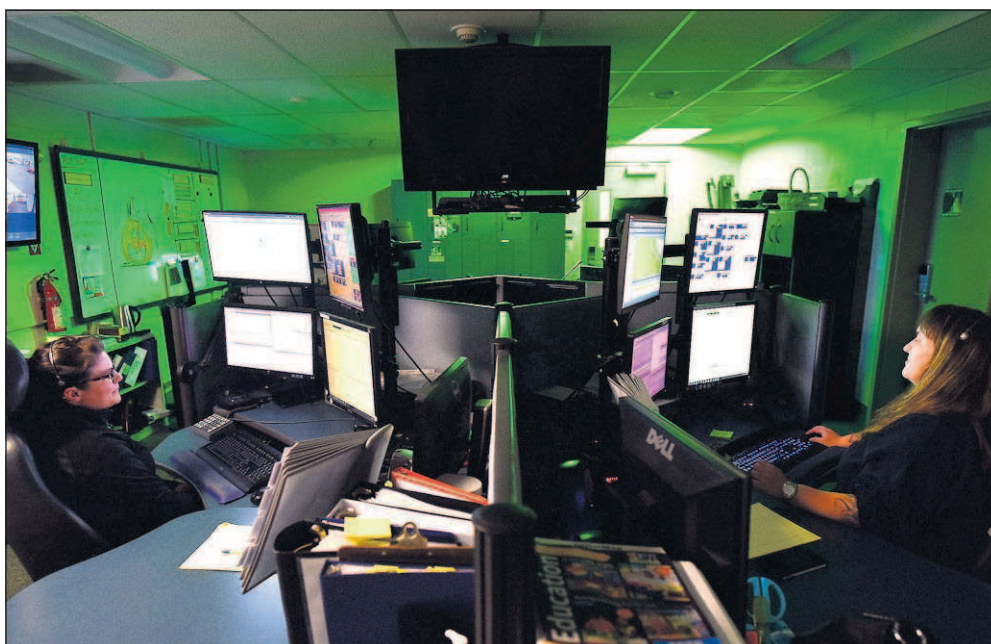
Early this month, Candace Pozdolski, a lead dispatcher with 11 years of experience, earned the state chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials' Telecommunicator of the Year Award. She also received an Impact award for her part in implementing a text to 911 system.

After three years working in Astoria, Pozdolski was promoted to the newly formed operations supervisor position earlier this month. The position, created to improve communication and management at the dispatch center, will allow Pozdolski to oversee the planning, training and supervision of the daily operations of the center.

## Critical Incident

Jennifer Peden, another lead dispatcher, received two Critical Incident awards.

Earlier this year, Peden handled a welfare check call for a war veteran who was making



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian  
Candace Pozdolski, left, and Jennifer Peden, right, are both lead dispatchers at the Astoria 911 Dispatch, and both received awards earlier this month.

suicidal statements as he was leaving work in Warrenton. Officers responded to his home but were unable to locate him. After Peden's call to the man's cell phone went unanswered, he soon called back.

Peden ensured that he was not going to harm himself as police responded to the scene.

She also put him in touch with her brother, a combat veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.

In March of 2016, Peden helped a tow-truck driver as he attempted to locate a four-axle, 50-ton Sysco Food semi-truck that was stalled on U.S. Highway 101 Business near

Production Lane. The driver, given poor directions, was near the Astoria Regional Airport at the time.

Peden took about five minutes to help him find the truck. Soon after, the tow-truck driver called Emergency Communications Manager Jeff Rusiecki to compliment Peden.

# New management at Red Building Loft

The Daily Astorian

Briana Smith has taken over management of events center The Loft at the Red Building.

Smith, from Boring, first became interested in event management after coordinating a fashion show fundraiser in high school for Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

"I have been doing event management for quite a long time," she said. "The last four years, I was doing conference management all over the U.S. and Canada, so I'd plan events for IT leaders and oil and gas leaders."

Smith moved to Astoria several years ago with her husband. She volunteered her skills locally with events in Cannon Beach and with the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce. She connected with the previous Loft operators Evie Larson and Jessica Newhall through her involvement with the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association's Shore-Style Wedding Faire held in the space.

The space formerly had been closed until March 2013, when Unionfish Properties,



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian  
Briana Smith recently took over management of the Loft at the Red Building.

the original developer behind the Red Building, decided to convert the loft into office space, citing the difficulty of finding uses for the space in the winter months. Below the loft is the popular, upscale restaurant Bridgewater Bistro.

The Loft is mostly known for weddings, banquets and other formal occasions. But Smith said she hopes to expand the community offerings in the space, catering to anything from a pop-up yoga studio to a temporary gathering place for a church. She is also contemplating a New Year's Eve gala.

For more information, call 971-409-6246 or email [briana@theredbuildingloft.com](mailto:briana@theredbuildingloft.com)

# Vietnam War: 'We feel that all wars are fought twice'

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Roughly 13 million people viewed the first episode of the 18-hour Burns documentary. A decade of research and interviews went into the project, which covers the most important event since World War II, Burns said in a USA Today interview.

"This war didn't turn out well for Americans and we did ignore it and then, sort of, clung desperately to some fairly superficial facts," Burns said.

## 'I would've moved to Canada'

Hertel worked at a Ford Motor Co. plant in Louisville, Kentucky, in the 1960s. Weary of dodging the draft by attending college classes and working, he decided to sign up for a two-year enlistment.

At 20 years old, he thought he might have been blackballed economically had he decided to move to another country. Rather, after serving just two years, he figured he could reap some of the benefits afforded to veterans through the GI Bill.

"I knew we had no business being in Vietnam," he said. "If I had done what I thought was the right thing to do, I would've moved to Canada."

In his year overseas from 1968 to 1969, Hertel served as an enlisted soldier, conducting meteorological surveys in a camp that also housed much of the army's leadership. Because commanding officers were present, the camp was often shelled.

But Hertel remembers his time in the camp fondly. Following relatively short work

days, he spent much of his time reading, writing, listening to music and exchanging letters with his new wife.

"Overall, I felt like it was a pretty good year," he said. "It was just, like, very relaxing."

When his tour ended, so too did his mental involvement in the conflict — at least for the next four decades.

## Greeted by gunfire

Another local veteran, on the other hand, participated in anti-war activism as soon as he returned home.

Ben Hunt ran into legal trouble in the 1960s, and a judge presented two options: jail or the military. Opting for the latter, Hunt joined the army in 1966.

He had what he described as a "cushy job" at a base in Louisiana and could have remained there for his three-year enlistment. Instead, he decided that he wanted to experience the war for himself. He deployed in 1968 as a mechanic, helicopter door gunner and supply sergeant.

Hunt spent his first night in Vietnam — Jan. 31, 1968 — in Bien Hoa. He was greeted within hours of his arrival by gunfire — the Tet Offensive had just launched.

"Arriving there was a total shock," he said.

Following three sleep-deprived nights, the attack temporarily stopped. Hunt soon transferred to a camp north of Bien Hoa. For the rest of the

year, he tried to avoid becoming what both he and Hertel called a "grunt" — a soldier who spent days in the jungle fighting along the front lines.

"If you kept moving, you didn't get much trouble," Hunt said.

Hunt, now the proprietor of Sunset Lake Farm, returned to Oregon after the war to attend classes at Portland State University. He participated in a nationwide student strike in May of 1970 in response to President Richard Nixon's decision to expand the war into Cambodia.

The strike included the Kent State University demon-

stration, in which four students were shot by National Guardsmen.

"It was pretty exciting," Hunt said. "It was a pretty wild period."

## 'All wars are fought twice'

Both Hertel and Hunt largely agree with Burns' portrayal of the war, minus some details.

Hunt questioned some of the documentary's versions of why the U.S. became involved, as well as its portrayal of soldiers' daily life. Hertel, meanwhile, viewed some of the film's focus on emotional sto-

ries of soldiers who were killed — as opposed to a more thorough chronicling of facts — as propagandistic.

"There is gallantry and heroism in a war, but in the midst of all of this, the fact that we're supporting a colonial power against our basic beliefs of democracy, it's just totally lost," Hertel said.

In the USA Today interview, Burns said he hoped the

film would allow viewers to parse through solid facts about the war. It could be another step for veterans like Hertel and Hunt, who — in different ways — have devoted much of their lives trying to comprehend one of the pivotal events of their lives.

"We feel that all wars are fought twice," Burns said, "once on the battlefield and then in memory."

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