

Ship: 'A little drop or two of oil can make a big difference'

Continued from Page 1A

harmful oil, fuel and solvents into the water.

"There wasn't ever any significant spill, but any time a boat goes down, there is always some level of sheen in the water," Glenn said. "Just a little drop or two of oil can make a big difference."

Workers placed booms around the boat to keep pollution from spreading. Glenn also contacted the Coast Guard and the state Department of Ecology, and began working on finding the owners of the boat.

"We brought in divers on Saturday evening," Glenn said. "They plugged up any kinds of vents, tried to minimize any leaking coming out of the boat."

Coast Guard contractors pumped the remaining fuel out of the boat Sunday. Ecology officials have taken water samples, and are testing them to learn whether the demise of the Lihue caused any significant water pollution.

Glenn said the Lihue II was a "transient boat," meaning that it was traveling between destinations when it arrived in



The fishing vessel Lihue II sank at her mooring at the Port of Ilwaco over the weekend.

Ilwaco in mid-November.

Records from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission show the wood-hulled boat was built in 1939 by Hawaiian Tuna Parkers Ltd. — which eventually became part of Bumble Bee

Seafoods, based in Astoria.

As of March, the boat was owned by Stuart Arnold of Astoria, and registered in Warrenton, according to federal records. It appears that Arnold owned the boat for a number of years, as he com-

pleted the federal registration paperwork at least 12 times.

However, the boat may have recently changed hands, Glenn said.

"That's part of the problem, actually," Glenn said. "We're trying to determine



A life ring recovered from the Lihue II.

ownership."

Authorities are also trying to determine what, if any insurance coverage the boat had.

"It'll be a process, figuring all that out, and figuring out a plan to salvage," Glenn said.

Fishermen told Glenn the boat appears to have gone down "pretty quickly," but no one knows exactly why.

"When the divers went down to check everything, they noticed the wood is not in good condition," Glenn said. "We are not sure about the integrity of the hull. We're still trying to investigate that. I don't know if it can be determined or not."

Over the coming weeks, Ecology will continue to monitor the boat and test water samples to make sure

it isn't causing environmental harm. However, actually getting the boat out of the water could be a slow, complicated process.

Commercial fishing boats are often subject to oversight from multiple jurisdictions and agencies, each with its own rules and procedures. Derelict boats are money-sucking liabilities, so owners sometimes let the documentation lapse into disrepair along with the boats, or offload them through less-than-official channels. It can prove extremely difficult to determine who is actually legally responsible for a sunken boat.

Further complicating matters, removal is expensive. If the owner of the boat or an insurance company can't pay for removal, it might not happen. Washington state has a derelict vessel program, but it doesn't have nearly enough funding to deal with all of the decaying and abandoned boats in the state.

Glenn doesn't know yet what will happen with the Lihue II.

"All I can say is we're still in that process," Glenn said.

O'Meara: Oversees more than 50 people

Continued from Page 1A

"I didn't think I was worthy," he said. "You didn't come here unless your command held you in high regard. I just didn't think I was good enough."

It took O'Meara a year or two to get his boat-handling abilities up to snuff for the school.

"If you're good here, you're the best boat driver in the Coast Guard," he said.

O'Meara became an executive petty officer at Station Umpqua in Winchester Bay, and later the officer in charge of Station Juneau in Alaska.

He then did a tour as the operations chief for the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Hawaii, before being assigned as commanding officer of Station Yaquina Bay in Newport.

As leader of the lifeboat school, he oversees more than 50 people, including Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Jeremiah Wolf, a former student.

"It's uncommon to have former instructors here," Wolf said. "It's a great firsthand experience."

O'Meara said Wolf helps him focus on the school and turning out the best possible surfmen, with the help of eight instructors. They usually take in nine students a year, but recently added another class as the Coast Guard tries to fill a shortage in the position.

Being a surfman is tough on the body and can take half a decade of training. O'Meara has had multiple foot and knee surgeries, all of which he credited to the challenges of the profession.

"To be a surfman instructor is a totally selfless job," he said. "You're not going out and saving the day. You're teaching people how to save the day."

O'Meara has 22 years in the service. His family remains in Newport while his son Sean, 17, finishes high school. Next year, his wife Summer, a medical assistant, and daughter Meghan, 14, a freshman, will join him.

O'Meara is working on his bachelor's degree and hopes to eventually retire to Alaska to ply calmer waters as a ferry captain.

Officers: Both were raised on Oregon Coast

Continued from Page 1A

Murray was raised in Astoria, serves in the Air National Guard and previously worked on tugboats. He also studied fire science at Clatsop Community College.

Winfrey was raised in Tillamook and also studied fire science. He is an Army Reserve sergeant and has worked as a volunteer emergency medical technician and firefighter in the Banks and Tillamook areas.

Spalding joked that though both Murray and Winfrey have fire backgrounds "they made the right choice" to pursue careers with the Astoria Police Department.

In other business, the City Council ...

- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce for planning and engineering assistance. The city's Community Development Department has used CREST's planning services over the past decades.

A memo from City Manager Brett Estes noted that with all the changes in the department right now — Estes is serving as interim director while the city searches for a replacement for former Community Development Director Kevin Cronin — "there has

been a need for additional support for staff reports to the Planning Commission and for minor administrative permits."

CREST will provide up to 10 hours of planning services per week, according to the agreement. The city will pay a rate of \$60 per hour for the work.

- Finalized a modification of city code to allow Astoria High School students to park at Tapiola Park. The school is experiencing increased demands for student parking and the parking lots on school grounds are at capacity, Estes wrote in a memo. City ordinances had prohibited students from parking at the park. The modified ordinance will now let people authorized by the high school to park in the lower parking lot during regular school hours. It is up to the school to determine how it will authorize and permit students to park at Tapiola.

- Approved a liquor license for a new bottleshop set to open on Duane Street, Bridge and Tunnel Bottleshop and Taproom. Before the Council voted, Councilor Zetty Nemlowill declared a potential conflict since her husband is one of the owners of Fort George Brewery, a business that distributes alcohol and may do business with the bottleshop in the future.



Pilings are replaced Monday at the West End Mooring Basin while elsewhere at the facility, a routine dredging operation was underway.

Dredging: In-water work period ends Feb. 28



Workers prepare pipe Monday to be moved into place for a dredging operation at the West End Mooring Basin at the Port of Astoria.



A replacement piling is lowered into place Monday at the Port of Astoria's West End Mooring Basin.

Continued from Page 1A

The Port of Ilwaco is a smaller agency mostly based around a marina. To maintain that marina, Ilwaco has a much smaller hydraulic suction dredge — a waterborne aardvark that loosens and sucks up sediment before piping it away for disposal.

"We're always talking about what we do with our dredge," said Guy Glenn Jr., the Port of Ilwaco's executive director. "We dredged the Port of Chinook last dredging season earlier this year."

Ilwaco's dredge was trucked across the Columbia River on the Astoria Bridge a couple of weeks ago and lowered into the water by Astoria's boat lift at Pier 3. After waiting for permits, the crew received the go-ahead Monday to start dredging, with Port of Astoria crews providing support.

John Demase, manager of marinas for the Port of Ilwaco, said his crew will work in Astoria until January. The multiyear effort will start at the northeastern end of the marina, where a growing sand bar leaves boat slips high and dry at low tide. Ilwaco's dredge will work westward toward the Port of Astoria's fueling dock, before heading back to Washington in January to finish other dredging projects by the time the federally designated in-water work period ends Feb. 28.

"We'll be kind of monitoring how things go in Astoria, and hopefully things will turn out well, and there will be other opportunities," Glenn said.