

# Light up a life this Christmas

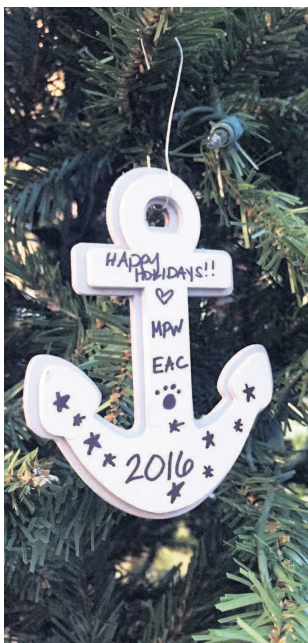
Ocean Beach Hospital hosts Tree of Light ceremony Dec. 1

By PATTY HARDIN  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

For many holiday lovers, the lighting of a Christmas tree, whether in a private home or public venue, marks the official start of the Christmas season.

The Ocean Beach Hospital Foundation Board in Ilwaco invites the public to welcome the holidays with a Tree of Light ceremony. The event will take place 9:45 a.m. Friday, Dec. 1, in the Ocean Beach Hospital lobby.

Caregivers, who are often family members, give so much of their time to care for others, and sometimes their efforts are overlooked. "This ceremony honors loved ones, caregivers and family," said



COURTESY PATTY HARDIN

An ornament hangs on the Christmas tree at Ocean Beach Hospital in 2016.

Nansen Malin, Foundation Board president.

Valerie Bittner, a certified lab technician at Ocean Beach Hospital, said the ceremony is "a time we would like to reflect on

what it means to be a presence in our community."

"It's a time to cherish, commemorate, give thanks, share thoughtful memories and be blessed for each day," she said.

Why hold the tree lighting at the hospital?

"The hospital lobby is a busy place," Malin said. "It is our hope that the Tree of Light will brighten everyone's spirits."

The holidays are a busy time. It can be easy to forget the people who give of their time to make others' lives a little better.

"People will have time to think of who has been a light in their lives," Malin said. "They can purchase an ornament and place it on the tree in that person's honor."

Wondering what to get someone for Christmas? Consider one of the special ornaments handcrafted by Val Bittner. You can write the name of the person you are honoring on the ornament and hang it on the tree.


Ornaments are available in the hospital gift shop. Donations of any amount are welcome but not required. Funds go to the Ocean Beach Hospital Foundation.

These ornaments will be held for the donors after the tree is removed if they would like to have the keepsake for their own tree at home.

"This ceremony is an important tradition for the community," Malin said. "The Tree of Light brightens the spirits of so many who arrive at the hospital to receive care or to bring comfort to their loved ones. The holiday season is a time when we can reflect on our lives and our loved ones.

"Placing an ornament on the tree is a tangible representation of honoring that person," she continued. "It is really fun to watch people look at each ornament. They read the names and give thanks for those people, too."

The tree comes down after Christmas, and the ornaments will be held for pickup. "People need to let us know they want them," Malin said. "We will have a list."

Christmas isn't Christmas without music and special treats. The Ilwaco High School Choir will be singing at the tree lighting, and there will be coffee, tea, hot cider and yummy treats. 

## Columbia Bar Mediterranean Mule

By RYAN HUME  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

As the sun drifts toward the constellation of Capricornus, aiming to reach that celestial cluster around late December, the local bar and restaurant Capricorn, in downtown Astoria, recently achieved another milestone.

Nov. 29 was the one-year anniversary of Elena Shern's pub in the space formerly occupied by Blu Orchid Thai on Commercial Street.

I recently visited Capricorn Pub & Fine Foods as Shern was preparing to hold a Thanksgiving feast in the spot for customers as well as her family.

Shern took a break from stuffing cabbage rolls — one of the Mediterranean delicacies her menu is known for — to pour me a drink. Having landed in Astoria by way of Romania, Greece, Turkey and Wisconsin, Shern's bar has a similar global appeal, with some specific liquors and liqueurs popular south of the Balkan peninsula in Athens, Istanbul and Tripoli.

The Mediterranean Mule — a sweeter, sunnier version of what they are pouring into copper mugs in dreary Moscow — gets its richness from Figenza, a fig-infused vodka

that reminds her of her travels through Greece and Turkey, though it is imported from Germany.


One of the nice things about having so many innovative bartenders in this town is that they have to source their booze through our local liquor stores, which means our local liquor stores have plenty of high-quality imports and domestics for the home consumer to play around with. Figenza is available at the Astoria Liquor Store.

And Shern says, while she is aware of the recent health scare raised by copper mugs, you shouldn't forgo the proper vessel. It's not really a Mule without it.

### The Mediterranean Mule:

2 ounces Figenza, a fig-infused vodka  
Cock and Bull ginger beer  
Fresh lime juice  
Slice of lime for garnish  
Ice

Pour the Figenza into a copper mug. Add ice. Top off the mug with ginger beer, then squeeze in the lime juice and garnish with a fresh slice of lime.

—Recipe courtesy of Elena Shern, owner and manager, Capricorn Pub & Fine Foods, Astoria, Oregon 

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