

# 2017: Moments of glory arrived for area high school sports teams

Continued from Page 1A

## Short-term rentals

In a closely watched decision, Gearhart voters rejected a ballot measure that would have repealed the city's vacation rental rules.

The measure failed 77 percent to 23 percent Nov. 8. It was the culmination of months of fierce debate online and in front yards, and five years of discussion before that. In 2013, city leaders and residents had sought to improve the stock of long-term rental housing in Gearhart amid concerns about how vacation rentals could impact the city's atmosphere and livability.

Gearhart essentially voted in favor of preserving an essentially small-town residential character. The decision tells us something about preferences for the entire North Coast in the years ahead, and sketches out a path for other coastal towns that want to accommodate some vacation rentals without making them a dominant economic theme. Several of Clatsop County's cities are struggling with the rise of online rental companies like Airbnb and Vacasa in their communities.

Now that Gearhart has made its decision, Clatsop County commissioners plan to press ahead with crafting county-wide regulations.

## Schools win championships

Moments of glory arrived thick and fast for the North Coast's high school sports teams.

The Seaside boys basketball team made school history in March, winning its first-ever state championship. Following a Feb. 10 loss at Valley Catholic, the Gulls caught fire and won seven in a row, including a 71-63 victory over Valley Catholic in the Class 4A state title game. The Gulls captured the hearts of Seaside, winning a championship for Bill Westerholm in his 19th year as the coach.

In an epic come-from-behind win, Knappa won its second 2A/1A baseball crown in three years, defeating Reedsport 10-9 in the state title game in June. Trailing Reedsport 9-1 after five innings and 9-3 heading into the bottom of the seventh, the Loggers scored seven runs to secure the win. With most of its team returning, Knappa will be the favorite to win its third championship in four years next June.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Knappa Loggers won the state championship on a walk-off after being down 9-1 earlier in the game against Reedsport.

And the Astoria High School girls track and field team continued its dynasty, winning its third consecutive 4A state championship in May.

## Port of Astoria woes

The Port of Astoria had a very dysfunctional year in 2017.

In October, a jury determined the Port had breached a contract with Param Hotel Corp over a lease at the Astoria Riverwalk Inn. The jury awarded \$4 million in damages to the hotel company. The amount was later reduced to less than \$1 million.

In a May election, Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton, a wetlands specialist for Warrenton Fiber Co., lost his bid for another commissioner's seat to James Campbell, a marine contractor. Campbell won his reelection with more than 70 percent of the vote.

Fulton, who joined the commission in 2013, was part of a unanimous vote to hire Executive Director Jim Knight in 2014 but became a withering critic — along with Commissioner Bill Hunsinger — of Knight's management.

Then, at the end of November, the port announced it was relinquishing its hold on North Tongue Point. Staff estimated the agency had lost \$2 million in net revenue since it first began leasing the former U.S. Navy base in 2009. Plans to turn the site into a deepwater port or a site of other profit-building businesses had fallen through multiple times over the years.

Hyack Maritime purchased the property and intends to turn it into a marine fabrica-

tion and repair facility.

## Flavel blocks sold

The last building belonging to Mary Louise Flavel, descendant of prominent Astoria Captain George Flavel, sold to Portlanders Lisa and Jim Long. It was the third Flavel property to be sold recently. In 2016, another couple bought the nearby M&N Building.

The purchases mark a sea change for the underutilized and neglected downtown commercial buildings owned by the famous family.

## Police chief resigns

Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston resigned suddenly in August after more than 20 years with the department. An independent assessment revealed the department had been at a "point of crisis" under his leadership, undermined by politics, discord and conflict, issues further complicated by staffing shortages and flagging morale.

Former Beaverton Police Chief Geoff Spalding has served as interim chief since Johnston's departure, a role he will likely fill for some time. City Manager Brett Estes has said part of Spalding's role will be to evaluate what the department needs to move forward.

The department has since hired new officers, and is now only one officer short of a full roster.

## Justice reinvestment

Oregon has tried to slow the costly growth of prisons by relaxing sentences for drug and property crimes and giving counties grants to supervise more felons locally. The

reforms — known as justice reinvestment — have helped the state avoid building a new men's prison.

But Clatsop County has been among the top counties for prison use above the baseline, according to data from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.

District Attorney Josh Marquis has criticized the state's initiative as a "negative bounty system" that will reward counties that send fewer people to prison with more grant money.

## County commissioner turmoil

Clatsop County Commissioner Leanne Thompson found herself in the middle of a storm this year, increasing tensions between her and the other commissioners.

In September, Thompson came under investigation after she allegedly placed her hands on a county staffer and expressed frustration about County Manager Cameron Moore.

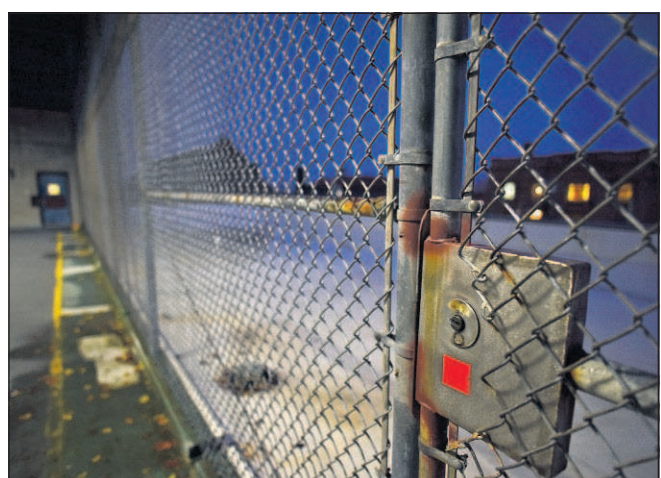
Thompson had also claimed more than \$3,000 of expenses in the first three months of the fiscal year, a huge chunk of what all five commissioners are allowed, combined, for the entire year. Thompson had been repeatedly criticized by commissioners for claiming nearly \$20,000 in travel and education expenses since 2015.

Chair Scott Lee called for Thompson's resignation at the end of October, criticizing her conduct and her spending. She fired back, saying, "My heart is in this place."

In November, it was announced Thompson would



People at an election watch party in Gearhart react to Mayor Matt Brown reading the preliminary results at McMenamins Hotel in Gearhart.



The Clatsop County jail in Astoria includes a secure recreation area on the roof of the building.



Approximately 20 people held a rally in front of the post office in Astoria in opposition to the GOP health care bill under consideration by Congress.

be reimbursed for the expenses she incurred so far this year, but may have to pay her own way in the future — a solution she herself offered.

## Historic business closes

After 101 years in Astoria, J.C. Penney closed its

doors this year. The store was one of the last major commercial retail outlets downtown and was one of 138 stores the company planned to close as it struggled to compete with online and niche retailers.

The building remains empty at the close of 2017.

**EMERALD HEIGHTS APARTMENTS**

**503-325-8221**

**2 & 3 BEDROOM APARTMENTS**

★ All Rents Include: Electricity • Garbage • Water ★

**ASK ABOUT NEWLY REMODELED APARTMENTS**

**Volunteer Pick of the Week**

**Marvin**

Senior Australian Shepherd/Chow Blend

At the ready with steady friendship, goodness of heart, strength of character - So much to love.

(Read about Marvin on Facebook.)

Sponsored By **EMERALD HEIGHTS APARTMENTS** **CLATSOP COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER**

1315 SE 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Warrenton • 861-PETS  
www.dogscats.org Noon to 4pm, Tues-Sat

**NEW YEARS EVE DINNER**

**NEW YORK ROAST**

with all the Trimmings

**Sunday, December 31 • 5:00 pm**

**\$15 each** **7 PM- 12:30 AM**

**Greg Parke**

PREPAID TICKETS ON SALE @ CLATSOP POST 12

**ASTORIA AMERICAN LEGION**

1132 Exchange Street • 325-5771

**Jonathon's, LTD.** *A Value Seeker's Paradise!*

**HOLIDAY SALE** SAVE! SAVE! SAVE!

**10-40% OFF** through January 15<sup>th</sup>

**ANTIQUE** **ART** **DIAMONDS** **ESTATE JEWELRY**

**Top Prices for GOLD & SILVER**

**DOWNTOWN ASTORIA ON 12TH STREET | 503-325-7600 | TUESDAY - SUNDAY**