

# A LIGHT TOUCH

Workers Tavern owner prepares to light up new neon sign connecting business with Astoria's past

By EDWARD STRATTON  
COASTWEEKEND

Part of what drew Diana Kirk to Workers Tavern, which she recently acquired from Mary Todd, was the history of the 91-year-old business.

Kirk came across a historical photo from 1964 showing the Workers Tavern, beneath the construction of the new Astoria Bridge, complete with a neon sign.

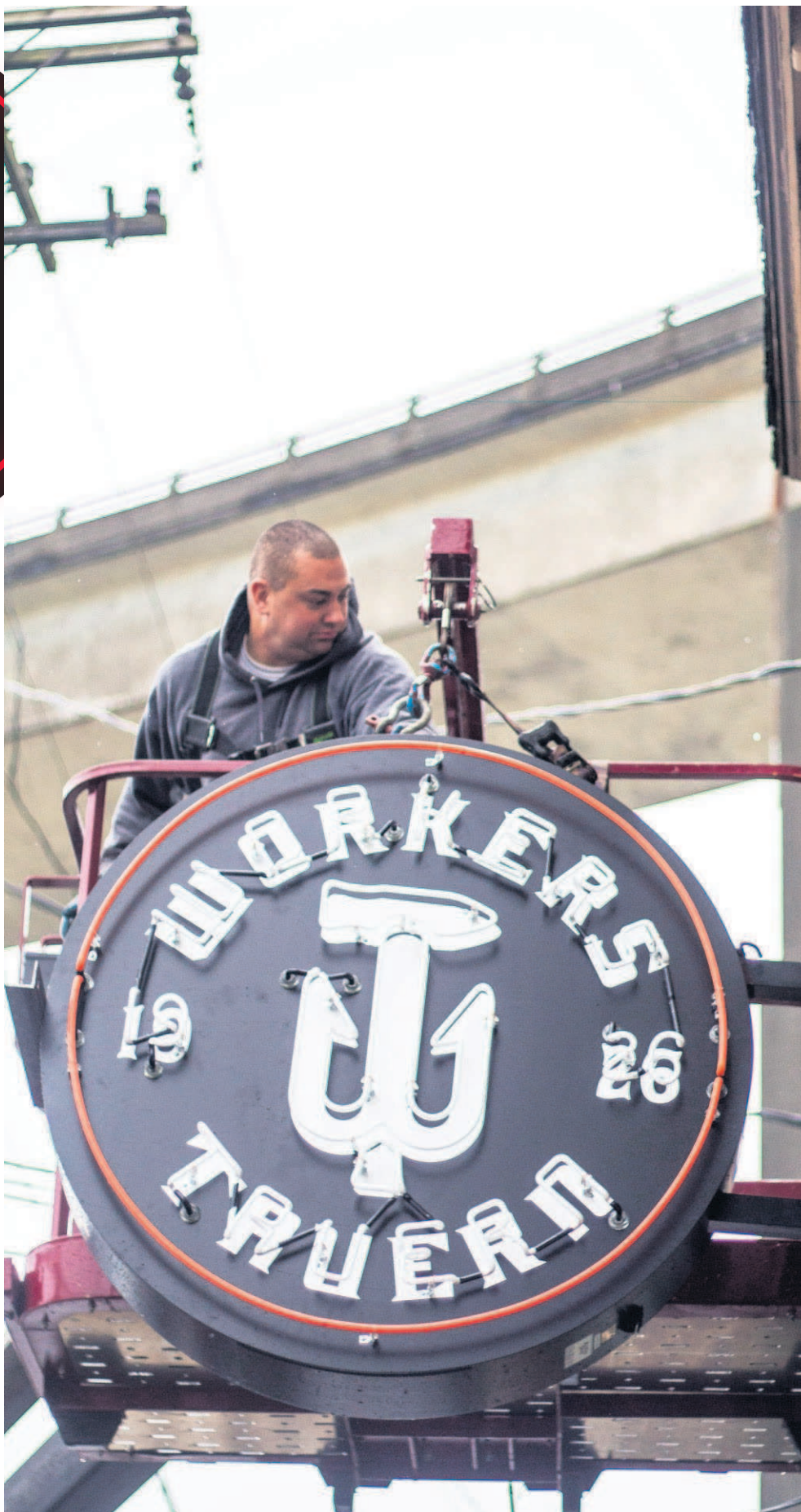
"I found out there used to be neon signs all around," she said.

Last week, Kirk had a new neon sign installed in front of Workers Tavern.

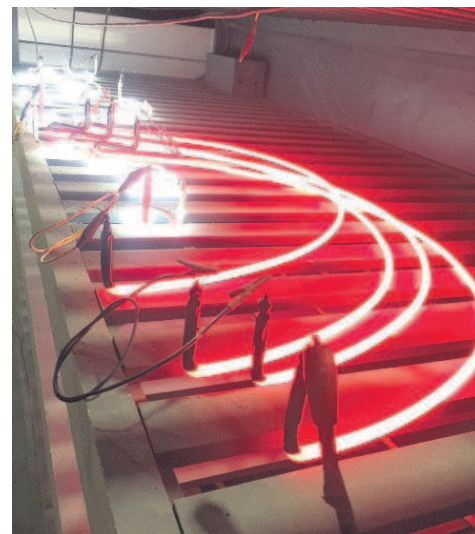
Designed by Jeff Miller with Red Dwarf Graphx, the sign was manufactured by Ramsay Signs under the direction of Bob Pershing, a sign-maker who started on the North Coast.

Kirk will hold a neon party Saturday, Feb. 10, to turn on the new sign for the first time (10 is the atomic number of the element neon). By then, she will have redone floors and a newly sealed bar top. Workers Tavern is located at 281 W. Marine Drive.

Pershing, 75, was born in Seaside and raised in Astoria. His father, Ed, was a neon tube-bender and sign-painter working under Arvid Wunola until late 1957, after which he moved to Seaside and started Ed's Signs.



James Penrose, a sign installer for Ramsay Signs, places the new sign for Workers Tavern, which will hold a sign-lighting party Saturday, Feb. 10.



DIANA KIRK PHOTO

Neon signs glow different colors depending on what type of gas is used.



EDWARD STRATTON PHOTO

The new Workers Tavern neon sign, designed by Red Dwarf Graphx and manufactured by Ramsay Signs, includes a W resembling a fishing hook and a T resembling a hammer — a nod to local industries and the blue-collar ethos of the bar.



DIANA KIRK PHOTO

Bob Pershing of Ramsay Signs gives a tour of the facility to show people how neon signs are made.

Continued on Page 15