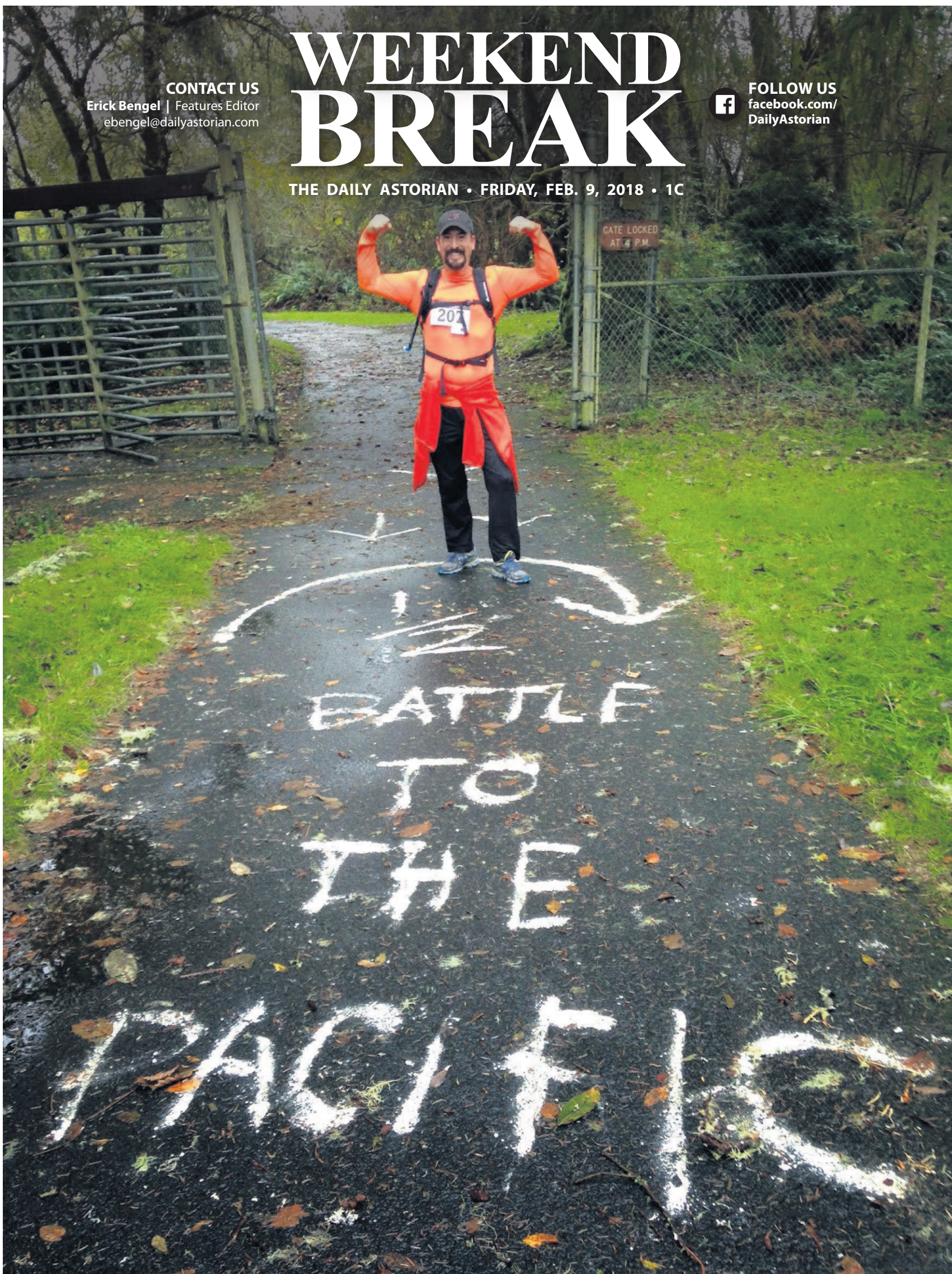


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WEEKEND BREAK

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Ed Hunt photos

Ed Hunt has completed the Battle to the Pacific half marathon three times.

WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

On running, run on

Everyone has to
find their own pace,
and their own race

By ED HUNT
For The Daily Astorian

I am not fast.

In high school, I got the nickname “Fast Eddie” because I was a sprinter. Short distances, I guess I was pretty fast. Fast enough to go to state on relay teams and in the 200 meters.

However, it was well understood that I did not run far.

Once I was punished for being late to practice. My high school track coach knew the worst thing he could make me do was run long distance, so he signed me up for the 3,200 meters in a meet. So many of the other runners passed me — lapped me — that the officials tried to get me to quit so they could all turn off the lights and go home.

I kept running.

My senior year I was faster than ever until a knee injury cut my season short. The only time in four years that I didn’t qualify for state. That was the end of running as far as I was concerned. I rode my bike, went to college and forgot about running.

When I became a nurse, something changed.

After years of writing at a desk 60 hours a week, I was fat and out of shape. My biggest challenge was sitting on the couch for three days watching adventure races on TV.

But nursing is a job where I’m on my feet 12 hours a day. I found myself



Runners say the first mile is a liar — don’t trust it.

working in a busy emergency department where many of the nurses around me competed in triathlons, marathons and Iron Man competitions, even

though they were a good deal older than me.

They inspired me to challenge myself.

Like my father, I was a walker and hiker, a trudger. Even in my desk job days, I’d try to get out and walk around the fields to breathe the fresh air and think.

Yet I hadn’t run at all in two decades.

Mistrust the first mile

I set my sights on the Great Columbia Crossing — a 10K run across the Astoria Bridge. It seemed so daunting. I set up a 3-mile course on the backroads near Rosburg, Washington, and started — slowly — training.

It’s been said that “the first mile is a liar: Don’t trust it.” This runner’s expression means that your body tells you all sorts of things to get you to quit, to turn back. If you can power through all the voices of doubt, you can keep going.

If you can keep going, you’ll feel better, not worse.

For the first mile, my feet hurt and my lungs burned, but once the endorphins kicked in, all was forgiven. The first mile of anything is a mountain of doubt you have to climb if you want a better view.

I found the more I ran, the better I felt. Not just healthier, but better. Exercise is meditation and stress relief. I downloaded audiobooks and podcasts so I’d look forward to running time, so I’d run longer.

Running in the cold rain is challenging, to say the least. On the other hand, it is good to get outdoors and pound out the miles despite the conditions and darkness and mist. It’s fun to learn to laugh when the rain blows sideways as

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