



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Johnny Vosika checks on the mysterious post in a field in Knappa.

## Voters' pamphlets will return

County had ended the practice in 2001

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Daily Astorian

Voters' pamphlets will go out for all future elections.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously Wednesday night to bring back the informational pamphlets that explain what is on the ballot.

The county discontinued the practice of printing the pamphlets in odd-numbered election years starting in 2001, because candidates often balked at the cost of being included and would not submit information. But many county residents advocated for the return of the pamphlets to help educate voters.

Voters' pamphlets are routine in even-numbered election years, but ballots in odd-numbered years don't include primaries or general elections for state and federal candidates. They do include important special district elections, local initiatives and tax levies, however. In 2017, for example, the May election featured contested races for the Port of Astoria Commission and an airport

See VOTERS' PAMPHLETS, Page 7A

## MANNING THEIR POST

Longtime Knappa residents recall origins of mysterious baseball field post

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

**K**NAPPA — As Knappa kids begin another baseball season, an annual question will persist around a small T-ball field. What's that thing out in center field?

A 4-foot-tall wooden post sticks out from the grass on the edge of the field on Hillcrest Loop Road near Marty Lane. While no one appears to fully understand why it is there, the figure was created in a much different era, when kids used the land for a different purpose.

Knappa Consolidated School — an elementary school — used to be at the site. Several former students who still live in the community recently recalled planting the post as part of a project in the 1940s. Sitting in a living room, Johnny Vosika, Gary Ziak, Gerry Backanen and Carl Paronen remembered how and when the post was placed, but they could only guess about why.

Thelma Vasalicia, a teacher, asked her students one day to bring colorful rocks to school the next morning. Students — at least the ones who followed the instructions — were able to drop them into a still-wet concrete base surrounding the post in front of the school.

The post has darkened over the years, but the longtime residents recalled that it originally was painted white with the words "Oregon Trail" written in black on the side. But other details are fuzzy for the men, who were under 10 years old at the time.

"When you're kids, you don't know what it's about," Vosika said. "At that age, who gives a hell about the Oregon Trail?"



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Gerry Backanen looks at an old class photo with former classmate Gary Ziak in the background.

The post was maintained — paint and all — until about 10 years ago.

"Somebody would go there and paint it up," Vosika said. "He must have died I guess."

The former elementary school students remain puzzled as to how their school project has lasted so long.

"It's just a wonder why it's still there after all these years," Backanen said.

While the post might be the last one standing in the area, it hasn't always been the only one. Similar posts — one every few thousand feet — used to form a trail in the area.

"I think everybody probably tore them out when they were making their farms," said Darlene Vosika, Johnny's wife.

Local historians — including McAndrew Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society — had never heard of the mysterious wooden figure. Kenny Hageman, president of Astoria Youth Baseball, said his only knowledge of the post comes from Ziak and the other former students.

"I've been able to find out nothing, but

See POST, Page 7A

**'The fir trees are gone. The school is gone. The post is still there.'**

Gary Ziak  
former elementary school student

## Port pitches environmental center at airport

Agency is seeking a federal grant to help

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The Port of Astoria is looking into a possible environmental research center at the Astoria Regional Airport in Warrenton.

Outside the airport is a rectangular plot of land where the Port has tried unsuccessfully since 1990 to develop an industrial park. Out of the 28 acres, only 7 acres are not considered wetlands and available to be developed.

"From a commercial development perspective, it's an uphill climb," said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director.

Rather than try to develop an industrial park, Knight said, he started thinking of creative ways to use the property to help address environmental issues the region faces surrounding wetlands, rising water tables, levees, tsunamis and earthquakes. The wetlands could be used as a living classroom.

"What if we created an educational research center that studied those problems?" Knight said.

Kevin Cronin, a former Astoria community development director, was contracted by the Port to seek grants. He is applying for a rural business development grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study the feasibility of the center.

"We think we can do that for \$25,000, \$30,000," Cronin said.

Knight has reached out to groups like Clatsop Community College, which is looking to start an environmental sciences program, and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, which works with landowners to rehabilitate wetlands, to gauge interest.

See PORT, Page 7A

## Klipsan cabin recognized for historical value

Family celebrates building's link to 1900s high society

By PATRICK WEBB  
Chinook Observer

KLIPSAN, Wash. — A beach house designed in 1908 for two prominent Northwest society dressmakers has been recognized for its historical value.

The Shogren House was named to the Washington Heritage Register and Washington state is asking that it be added to the National Register of

Historic Places. It is likely to join the village of Oysterville, the Shelburne Hotel in Seaview, the Klipsan Beach Lifesaving Station and three private homes in Seaview and Ocean Park on the register.

The family members who own it are descendants of Anne and May Shogren, daughters of Swedish immigrants who designed and made one-of-a-kind formal dresses for Portland society women in the early years of the last century.

"I think I would die before I sold it; I couldn't face that," said Cosette Moore, whose great-grandmother,



Patrick Webb/Chinook Observer

Cosette Moore of Pomeroy, left, and her daughter, Melissa Gardner of Long Beach, outside the Shogren House in Klipsan.

See CABIN, Page 4A

