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ONE DOLLAR

Snowy plovers spotted in Fort Stevens

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Snowy plovers (not the nest on Clatsop Spit).

First sighting in decades

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Three years ago, Fort Stevens State Park designated a half-mile portion of the beach as a “Western Snowy Plover Management Area” and invited the endangered birds to nest there. No snowy plovers took the park up on its offer.

But this week snowy plover nests were spotted at Clatsop Spit — the first time since the 1980s that anyone has seen the birds there.

Vanessa Blackstone, a wildlife biologist with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, says the sighting is even more exciting because it connects the Western Washington state and Northern Oregon snowy plover populations.

The possibility for this overlap was one

big reason why the department originally picked the Clatsop Spit area, bordered by the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean, as a management area.

“Oregonians have helped plovers return to the North Coast, and Clatsop Spit is an important link between our Tillamook County birds and those that live in Washington,” Blackstone said. “Plovers

See **BIRDS**, Page 7A

Legion posts seek new members

As 100-year anniversary nears, American Legion membership falters

By BRENNNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

Hundreds will attend Memorial Day events around the county in memory of those who died while serving in the military.

But as wreath ceremonies and flag salutes unfold, concerns about the longevity of the institution that largely coordinates these events remain a troublesome undercurrent to an already somber holiday.

The American Legion, a wartime veterans organization that focuses on veteran outreach and community service, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2019. But it has been declining in membership nationwide for years.

In Oregon alone, membership has dropped from around 21,500 in 2005 to 16,700 last year — and local legion posts are also feeling the crunch.

Mike Phillips, the adjutant of Clatsop Post 12 of the American Legion, said while the local finances have remained stable, membership between the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion branches have dropped from 1,110 when he joined in 2002 down to below 800.

With fewer people joining, worries have mounted about who will take over organizing traditional ceremonies and events.

“We want to get more young people involved,” Phillips said. “We only have about 50 members from Middle East wars — that’s the same as our World War II membership.”

At American Legion Post 168 in Cannon Beach, membership has dropped about 25 percent in the last 10 years, Adjutant Agris Pavlovskis said. But what has impacted this post more has been a decline in turnout at fundraising events like classic oyster feeds and rib night specials.

See **LEGION**, Page 5A

Headed for the hills



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Joel Huckins unpacks a kit containing emergency response supplies at the fire station in Elsie.

Inland communities bear burden of tsunami warnings

By BRENNNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

ELSIE — When a tsunami watch was issued early Jan. 23, dozens of people got in their cars and headed for the hills.

By 3 a.m., cars were stranded on the side of the highway — either from running out of gas or from slipping off the black ice that covered the highway that night. A bonfire was already raging in the Camp 18 Restaurant parking lot.

Out to respond was the Community Emergency Response Team from Elsie-Vinemapple, an unincorporated town about 20 miles up Highway 26. The 12-person team walked along the road, going car by car to make sure everyone was safe.

“We were making sure people weren’t frozen in their cars,” said team member Diane Jette. “People didn’t have gas in their tanks, with little babies bundled up in the back. They were cold and couldn’t go anywhere.”

The event hardly surprised the locals. In fact, it’s a phenomenon that happens nearly every time a tsunami watch or warning is issued along the coast.

As one of the first communities clearly out of the tsunami inundation zone when heading east from the coast, the all-volunteer response team has come to face the realities of being a default evacuation center when disaster strikes.

“If the coast gets threats of inundation, like it did (in 2011), half the coast ends up here,” said Assistant Fire Chief Hans Mulder

of Elsie-Vinemapple Fire Department. “We get a major influx this way.”

‘Way behind the curve’

Like many community emergency response teams in Clatsop County, the one in Elsie-Vinemapple developed after the 2007 Great Coastal Gale closed roads and shut down power for almost two weeks.

Relative geographic remoteness, no communication and multiple road closures from tree blowdown and flooding isolated the community from major services, Jette said.

Since then, the group has worked to become as self-sufficient as possible, conducting training in emergency

See **WARNINGS**, Page 7A

New Astoria employee blending in with the community

Taylor ‘seduced by the river and forest’

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Tiffany Taylor stood outside her house one day and listened to Astoria’s particular music: fog horns, church bells, the Fort George Brewery’s 5 o’clock whistle.

Taylor is about to begin her third week with the city of Astoria as the new administrative assistant for the community development department,

EVERYDAY
people

after moving here nearly two years ago.

She grew up in Southern California and Hawaii and has lived in Australia and Utah, but all of those places were determined by circumstances. They were places her family chose to live when she was a child, where she moved for school or work or because of marriage.

Then she looked up one day and the business where she had worked for years was about to

be sold and her son was about to graduate from high school. Taylor knew changes were on the horizon. She thought about moving.

“All of the sudden, I was like, wait, I could pick anywhere.”

She had never explored the Pacific Northwest and wanted to live near water again, but when she flew up to look around, Astoria felt the most like home.

She found herself “seduced by the river and forest and how they’re both providers of life but will also take life.” She thought about the kind of



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Tiffany Taylor is the new administrative assistant for Astoria’s community development department.

See **TAYLOR**, Page 7A

