

Sex abuse trial delayed following Facebook posts

Gustafson was indicted in 2015

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

A sex abuse trial involving a former surgeon has been delayed due to two Facebook posts in which the victim's mother discussed the case. Robert John Gustafson, 49, of North Dakota, was accused in 2015 of sexually abusing a girl over a two-year period while he lived in Seaside. He was indicted on 10 counts of first-degree sex abuse and two counts of first-degree encouraging child sex abuse. The indictment alleged he repeatedly touched a girl under 14 and had her touch him between 2009 and 2011.



Robert John Gustafson

He posted \$250,000 bail and was released from jail. Over the past three years, a host of factors delayed and complicated the case. The lengthy proceedings were mentioned in the woman's Facebook posts. "I hate the justice system," the woman wrote in the first post in early July. "I hate that we've waited for a trial for over three years. I hate that the victim will be on the stand and called a liar."

The Clatsop County District Attorney's Office learned of the posts last week and notified Paul Hood, Gustafson's Portland-based attorney, and Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas. Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown,

the lead prosecutor, said he advised the woman — who has since removed the posts from public view — to stop posting about the case on social media.

"We can't forbid people to use social media, but we can try to warn about the perils of social media," Brown said.

At a hearing Tuesday, Hood largely focused on another one of the woman's posts in July. The woman posted a news story about the case and complained that Gustafson is still out of jail despite a 2015 drunken-driving arrest, a violation of his release agreement.

"If you would like to fill the stands with your support, or peacefully protest outside, I would welcome your company. While I know the entire trial will be spent with the defense trying to discredit me and my child, I know people who care about us will see through the mess," she wrote. "Fingers crossed the jury will too."

Hood accused the woman of trying to "poison the jury pool" and inciting violence against Gustafson. "I think she hopes someone will assault or kill (Gustafson)," he said. "I say that and I mean it."

Hood told Matyas he would need more time to investigate how widely the posts were viewed and survey the hundreds of comments they attracted.

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Port approves new airplane hangar

Space for former Nirvana bassist

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission on Tuesday approved a new private hangar at the Astoria Regional Airport for KAST Hangars, a company that includes Krist Novoselic, the former Nirvana bassist and avid aviator.

The 6,000-square foot hangar will be located next to Lektro, an electric airplane tug manufacturer, and the Columbia River Bar Pilots.

Gary Kobes, the airport manager, said there will be a four- to six-month due diligence period while the Port works with the company to

get approval from Warrenton and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Brian Fleming, a representative of KAST Hangars, said the company has already ordered engineering and hopes to start construction shortly after approval.

The Port Commission agreed to a 20-year lease with up to six five-year extension options. Rent during due diligence will be \$200 a month. After approval, KAST Hangars will pay nearly \$8,000 annually.

KAST Hangars is registered to Allen Draher, a Seattle attorney associated with Nirvana. Novoselic, who lives in Wahkiakum County, Washington, received his FAA pilot license in the early 2000s and owns a Cessna 182.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Traffic at the intersection of U.S. Highway 101 and Ensign Lane near the new Walmart in Warrenton.

'We've had a lot of near misses'

Traffic causing issues near new Walmart

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — One of the most interesting aspects of a visit to the new Walmart, as it turns out, may be the commute.

Increased traffic to the retail giant has exacerbated existing patterns and created new ones. Representatives from Clatsop County, Warrenton, the state Department of Transportation and law enforcement agencies met last week to discuss the issues and brainstorm solutions.

"I think it'd be fair to say there were always minor problems, and once you increase the traffic, those minor problems become major problems," Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore said.

Many of the issues are taking place at a segment of Ensign Lane between Discovery Lane and the largest entrance to the Walmart parking lot. That portion of the road includes what is referred to as a "pork chop" concrete island. Its shape allows drivers to turn left onto Discovery Lane while prohibiting — in theory — those leaving the Walmart parking lot



Traffic issues have been identified around the entrance to the new Walmart.

from making a left turn when entering the busy street.

The lane at the parking lot's exit — a few steps southeast of U.S. Highway 101 — has been designated as a right turn only. But some drivers are choosing not to make a right turn, which would require them to make other turns to eventually find their way back to the intersection of the street and the high-

way, Warrenton Police Chief Mathew Workman said. Instead they are making illegal left turns onto Ensign Lane and driving around the island.

Considering the traffic coming from a number of businesses on Discovery Lane across the street, these turns have created hazards.

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'THESE ARE TYPICALLY GOOD PROBLEMS TO HAVE. WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE SOME GROWTH, YOU HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH IT.'

Cameron Moore | Clatsop County manager

A 'library on wheels' for Astoria

A book bike named 'Spokes'

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Ready to meet the Astoria Library's "spokes" person? It's going to be wheely exciting.

Library staff devoted some time — maybe more than they want to admit — to drafting plans for their newest outreach tool: a bike-powered library on wheels named "Spokes."

The custom-built cargo tricycle will travel to school and outdoor events, and even trun-

dle down the Astoria Riverwalk. A long cart at the front of the bike is lined with shelves for books and other materials. It also acts as a Wi-Fi hot spot. People will be able to check out items or sign up for library cards.

"It's basically just a way of getting the library out of the library, reaching people where they are," said Ami Kreider, a library assistant.

The book bike, or bookmobile, is not a new phenomenon. Libraries across the country use book bikes to convey library services and books around town.

Kreider said the idea "immediately resonated." She

is an avid cyclist, but also loved the idea of taking the library out of doors. She dreamed for several years of how to bring a book bike to Astoria.

"Libraries more and more are trying not to be confined in four walls, but to bring their services out to where people already are," she said.

Spokes cost around \$3,200, with a portion of the money coming from an endowment fund given to the city by Don Goodall in memory of his parents. Goodall intended the fund to be used for library resources, Library Director Jimmy Pearson said.

Employees with Fort



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

People gather at City Hall to admire the new book bike.

George Brewery offered to pick up the trike when they were in Portland on brewery business, saving the library the cost of shipping. Astoria Design Studio donated time to

decorate the sides of the cart. Spokes will contain a small collection of books devoted especially to the book bike,

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