

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

146TH YEAR, NO. 60

WEEKEND EDITION // FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

ONE DOLLAR

## THE CURMUDGEON IN THE WOODS



Photos by Patrick Webb/Chinook Observer

Walt Twidwell lives in rural Pacific County in a rustic home he built from scavenged lumber using a hand saw.

## Ailing sailor readies for his final voyage

By PATRICK WEBB  
Chinook Observer

When an octogenarian is ailing, it's a tad unfair to label him a curmudgeon. One exception lives in the woods of northern Pacific County, Washington.

"Well, I am," Walt Twidwell said, with a wry grin. "No," he frowned, "I'm a teddy bear in a grizzly bear frame."

But now when the 81-year-old grumbles about something, he has just cause. The old sailor has mesothelioma — terminal cancer caused by prolonged exposure to asbestos.

Twidwell was a boiler tender and fireman for the Navy. His nearly 20 years in uniform began in the aftermath of the Korean conflict and lasted through Vietnam. He conducted maintenance and repairs in

See TWIDWELL, Page 6A



Walt Twidwell, of Brooklyn, is pictured at the Ilwaco Masonic Lodge with an enlarged photo of himself in his Navy uniform.

## Astoria Coffee Co. to close storefront

Company to sell from home

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

In 1991, Rick Murray and Peg Davis fled Seattle to reestablish their small-town roots in Astoria. The couple founded an espresso bar, Astoria Coffee Co., at the time one of the only purveyors of gourmet coffee in town.

Two years later, they purchased a former grocery store at 37th Street and Leif Erickson Drive, famous for its part in the "The Goonies," and began roasting their own beans.

Four years after the death of his wife, Murray is planning to continue the roasting business from his home near Knappa, closing his iconic storefront by the end of the year and selling the building. He is searching for a retail site to carry his coffees and teas, while setting up online sales.

"When Peg suddenly died in 2014 I tried to keep the dream alive, and have tried some new and fun things, but now understand that what we did was a moment in time and cannot work without her," Murray wrote to customers in a recent message on Facebook.

Murray and Davis, originally from small towns in Indiana, left for Seattle in 1973. Murray's experience with the coffee business stretches back to 1979, when after applying on a paper bag he landed a job at the third location of then-nascent local coffee chain Starbucks. He began roasting coffee in 1984 until the two decided to flee the big city and start their coffee company in Astoria.

They started with an espresso bar downtown, sourcing beans from Seattle, before purchasing the current location, buying a gas-powered coffee roaster and moving upstairs.

"We had planned on doing this for as long as we could," Murray said. His wife's death "changed what was going on, and so I tried to do some other stuff. We opened a little deli, hired some people. But the location of the shop was probably not good for that."

See CLOSING, Page 7A



The Daily Astorian

Peg Davis and Rick Murray, pictured in 2009, began roasting beans at Astoria Coffee Co. on the corner of 37th Street and Leif Erikson Drive in 1993.

## Local crew responds to Hurricane Florence

### Four-person helicopter crew rescued 19 people in first flight

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
The Daily Astorian

A four-person helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Astoria is in North Carolina this week to help with Hurricane Florence rescue efforts.

The crew rescued 19 people and five pets Tuesday during its first flyover. Before the roughly 8 1/2-hour patrol, 2,000 people and 500 animals

had already been rescued.

Overall, dozens of people and millions of animals have died since the storm dropped trillions of gallons of rain. The crew was scheduled for another flyover Thursday and will remain in the area for at least a week, possibly two.

"We're glad to be here, helping people," said Christopher Hale, a rescue swimmer. "It's definitely awe-inspiring and something we will all remember for the rest of our lives."

The crew landed in Norfolk, Virginia on Monday morning after a red-eye flight. After driving an hour south to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, they were briefed that afternoon



Steve Helber/AP Photo

A Coast Guard aircrew from Astoria assists with relief operations during Hurricane Florence.

See COAST GUARD, Page 7A

