Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Discarded furniture and other items sit in a room in the basement of the butcher shop.

# TV show: 'You should see our basement if you want to see scary'

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At one point last April, the adventurers stayed overnight in the basement of Gulley's Butcher Shop on Commercial Street.

Co-owner Diana Gulley, who didn't know the show was shooting in the region, had struck up a conversation with a crew member who dropped in to grab a sandwich. He and his colleagues were filming at the Liberty Theatre on that block, he told her, showing a picture of the theater's basement.

"He said, 'Isn't that scary?'" Gulley recalled. "And I said, 'You should see our basement if you want to see scary.'"

Still not knowing who he was — she thought the filmmakers were collecting footage for a documentary — she took him on a basement tour.

A short time later, a producer came by and asked if she knew about "Ghost Adventures." She said she'd heard of it, but explained she doesn't watch TV. Then the cast and crew arrived. She gave them a follow-up tour while the cameras rolled.

"Real nice guys," she said. "Really funny."

She handed them the key, signed a secrecy agreement and left them alone to seek out whatever spirits lurk on the premises. The team came and went over the next couple of days.

Eerily enchanting as the butcher shop's basement is — with floors strewn with debris, walls of blackened wood, antique household items casually lying around and a chill-inducing ambiance — Gulley doesn't descend too often. "I don't like to be down here that much," she said, glancing around the dim space. "It is kind of creepy."

The show, which premiered 10 years ago and is entering its 17th season, has explored many locations in the U.S., the United Kingdom and other far-flung locations.

For the "Graveyard of the Pacific" premiere, Gulley said she probably won't do anything special. The butcher shop has already planned an unrelated customer-appreciation party for Saturday afternoon.

"We might come up with a haunted sausage," she said.

Sunlight shines into a room in the basement.

# Parking: Some visitors park in the middle of the street

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Some of the discussion revolved around the effects of social media and the internet. Fans of "The Goonies," the 1985 adventure from a story by Spielberg, are dedicated, passionate and often well-organized.

In addition to the rejuvenated popularity since 2015 due to the movie's 30-year anniversary, people from across the country encourage others to visit the house, said Dan Rhoads, owner of several downtown food carts.

"They all Googled it," Rhoads said. "They saw the movie 30 years ago that they haven't seen since then, and they think they deserve a right to come into anybody's neighborhood."

From there, the group discussed several strategies to counteract the internet and social media comments.

"Social media seems to be one of the enemies here, and outsmarting social media — that's, that's not a bad idea," Harrington said.

Neighbors also discussed some of the behavioral issues with some tourists. Rhoads said he's been yelled at, flipped off and threatened with physical violence. Someone may have even formed a group to leave poor online reviews of his food carts.

Some visitors park in the middle of the street, the wrong way or in a restricted area. Others walk on private property to find the right angle for pictures.

Residents sometimes confront tourists and snap pictures of license plates.

"It's funny how mad they get," Rhoads said. "'You have no right. It's my privacy.' You're in my neighborhood."

Some neighbors said the city should find ways to accommodate people who travel long distances to see the attraction, though most were not so keen.

Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said at the beginning of the meeting that the discussion probably would not last long. He rethought that about halfway through.

"I lied when I said I thought this was going to be a quick meeting," Spalding joked.

The police chief will present a proposal to the City Council later this month to increase parking fines in the area from $25 to $100, he said.

He added, though, that residents would be subject to the fines as well unless a permit system is implemented, which carries its own complications. He may organize another discussion after the City Council decides on the parking fines.

**"It's funny how mad they get. 'You have no right. It's my privacy.' You're in my neighborhood."**

**Dan Rhoads**
owner of several downtown food carts

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# Convictions: Law had critics

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through punishment alone, and that a conviction with the potential to take away a person's employment and housing leaves them poorly situated to overcome that addiction."

The Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association endorsed reducing the penalty for drug possession, with the understanding drug treatment would be provided. But the law had critics at the Legislature and in law enforcement.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, was the only Democrat to vote against the idea in the Senate. Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis warned last year that it "runs up the white flag" to heroin and meth addiction.

Marquis has not changed his opinion.

"That has a pretty dramatic effect, and you can see that," the district attorney said of the data after the first year. "I mean, that's a huge reduction in convictions.

"I don't believe that that reflects an actual reduction in the problem."

Prosecutors and police are likely being less aggressive about drug possession given the misdemeanor penalty and an overcrowded county jail, Marquis said. Across the state, misdemeanor drug convictions have risen sharply since the law, but not in Clatsop County.

"There's really no question as to why," Marquis said. "Which is that the law has now said that these are no more important than a minor vandalism charge. And there's going to be no long-term consequences."

The law, which took effect in August 2017, reclassified the possession of small amounts of drugs from felonies to misdemeanors. The threshold for heroin, for example, is less than 1 gram, while methamphetamine is less than 2 grams.

People who have any prior felony conviction, or two or more drug possession convictions, are not eligible for the reduced penalty.

Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding has not given his officers any special direction on how to approach drug possession since the change to the law.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's business as usual in terms of enforcing those laws," he said.

# Company: Cleanup expected to close company

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The Department of Environmental Quality's orphan program, used when the responsible parties are unable or unwilling to pay, will cover about $500,000 worth of continued maintenance and monitoring after the cleanup.

The cleanup agreement also includes at least $130,000 worth of natural resource damages and a restoration agreed to by project trustees, including tribal governments and natural resource agencies. The restoration will include removing old pilings and piers to improve tidal habitat. At least $75,000 will go to the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce for tidal habitat restoration projects around Youngs Bay.

Local leaders had been searching for ways to relocate the company's specialization in wooden-hulled boats elsewhere, with the industrial docks at North Tongue Point a likely location. Willie Toristoja, co-owner of WCT Marine & Construction Inc. at Tongue Point, said he has already hired two shipwrights from Fastabend and started taking in some of his former customers.

"We're definitely seeing an increase" in business, he said.

Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The cleanup of Astoria Marine Construction Co., which includes capping contaminated sediment along the Lewis and Clark River, is expected to close the 93-year-old company.