



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Daric Moore, co-founder of Pier Pressure Productions, discusses details about the theater renovation project.

Landlord, insurer sue tenants over pot explosion

Latest legal case over Uniontown blast

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The owner and insurer of a Uniontown building gutted by a butane hash oil explosion two years ago is suing the former tenants and their investors for negligence.

Richard Delphia owns the building at the corner of Portway and Industry streets where Higher Level Concentrates, owned by William "Chris" West and Jason Oei, ran a marijuana grow site and a production space making butane hash oil, a concentrated form of the plant's psychoactive component, THC. Sweet Relief, a local marijuana store chain, subleased a space upstairs for retail sales.

Delphia's building was insured by Hudson Specialty Insurance Co., the primary plaintiff in the lawsuit.

An explosion and flash fire rocked Delphia's building in 2016, sending contractor Jacob Magley to the hospital with serious burns. He sued Oei and West, claiming the two had been vaporizing hash with an open heat source while making oil in an open-ended system in violation of state guidelines.

Magley also sued Delphia, Sweet Relief and John Harper, a regional smoke shop owner and financier of Higher Level. The lawsuit was later settled for an undisclosed amount.

Hudson and Delphia's lawsuit, filed on the two-year anniversary of the explosion and fire, seeks \$351,000 for damages to the building, claiming the unlawful use of a hazardous substance such as butane gas in an open-ended system was a violation of Oei and West's lease.

Sweet Relief and Harper's companies were named as co-defendants for their knowledge of the operation.

The lawsuit claims the defendants negligently failed to install the closed-loop extraction system and comply with state regulations.

"As a direct and proximate result of the negligence of each of the defendants, the open loop THC oil extraction process failed, causing (liquefied petroleum) gas to accumulate and ignite," the lawsuit said. "The explosion and fire caused extensive damage to the building."

Oei and West were convicted last year of felony assault and misdemeanor reckless endangerment and sentenced to three years probation. Both filed for bankruptcy protection from creditors.

None of the defendants provided comment on the lawsuit. Delphia's building is still a burned-out husk surrounded by chain-link fencing and plywood boards.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Richard Delphia's building at Portway and Industry streets was gutted two years ago by an explosion and flash fire fueled by butane gas.

New theater in the works in Astoria

A space on Commercial Street

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

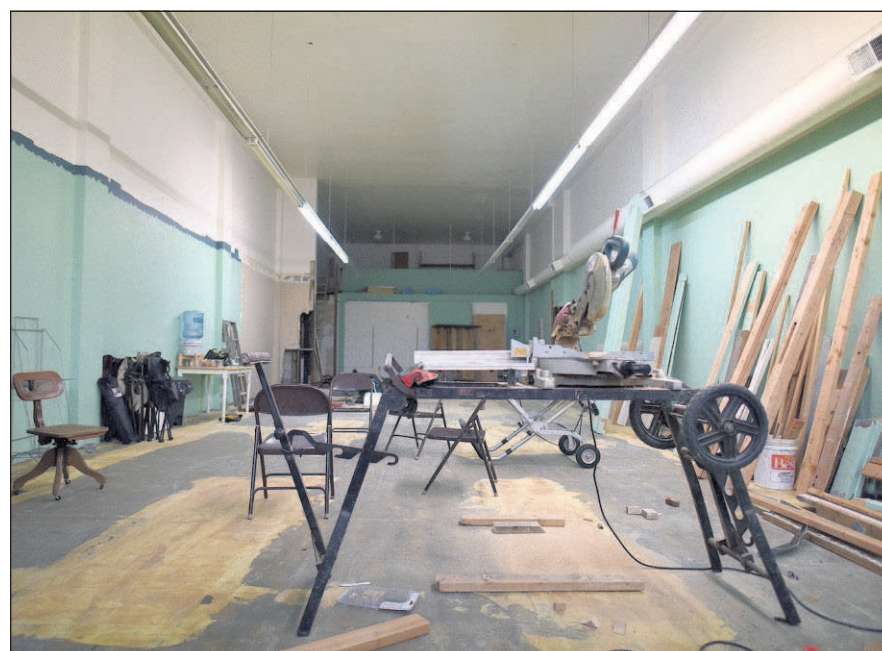
They thought maybe three or four people would show up.

But the morning performance at Astoria's new black box theater on Oct. 15 — a salute to the theater's address, 1015 Commercial St. in the Odd Fellows Building — was packed. People who couldn't find seats on an array of metal folding chairs or sagging camp chairs leaned against the wall with the performers in what is still more a large unfinished room than a theater. They cheered loudly as the founders of Pier Pressure Productions introduced themselves and ushered dramatic, musical and comedic acts to the front.

For Susi Brown and others in the theater community, it proved Astoria is hungry for live theater.

Astoria offers a rich variety of many different kinds of art, but sometimes lacks a regular place where people can experience live theater, said Brown, who founded the first Pier Pressure Productions in 2010. She has been involved in the local theater community as a director, actor and educator since the late 1970s.

There is of course "Shanghai'd in Astoria," the classic community theater production put on by the Astor Street Opry



Renovation work continues in the Pier Pressure Productions theater in downtown Astoria.

Company and now in its 35th season. The company opens its doors for other ventures outside its usual roster of shows, but only several times a year. There are occasional readers' theater events. The Performing Arts Center offers the occasional play. KALA, a downtown space more often used as a music venue or a gallery space, sometimes includes a drama. The Liberty Theatre hopes to host large productions in the future, but is limited by its

stage setup.

Clatsop Community College nixed its theater department years ago. Small theaters that once offered a wide variety of plays have also shut down. The Coaster Theater in Cannon Beach remains a hub for actors and directors in the community, but for people who live in Astoria, it can be a trek.

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'WHAT IT SEEMS TO ME IS HAPPENING IN THIS TOWN RIGHT NOW IS ANOTHER GENERATION OF PEOPLE IS SHOWING INTEREST IN TAKING OVER SOME OF THE ENDEAVORS.'

Edward James | Astoria native who went on to work professionally in theater

Mount Hood fault lines could trigger quake

A 7.2 temblor is possible

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Residents in the Pacific Northwest who dread a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami now have another possible quake to worry about.

Researchers say active fault lines on Mount Hood could potentially trigger a 7.2 magnitude quake that could reach Portland.

KGW-TV reported the recently discovered fault lines to the north, south and south-

west of Mount Hood extend to the Columbia River.

Ian Madin of the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and Ashley Streig of Portland State University found the fault lines during an analysis with new imaging technology. The fault lines were verified through field research.

Streig says the quake would be a short crustal earthquake, and it "would be strong enough to knock you off your feet."

Streig says the Portland area would likely see "strong ground motions and could suffer liquefaction damage along waterfront areas."



AP Photo/Don Ryan

Researchers have identified active fault lines on Mount Hood that could trigger a major quake.

