

GOLDEN MEMORIES

Coast Guard leaders talk Steadfast's past and future at 50th anniversary

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Coast Guard leaders reflected Friday on the cutter Steadfast, and discussed its uncertain future, during a 50th anniversary ceremony.

The ceremony was held at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria, with the ship partially visible in the background through a large glass window. Speakers included top Coast Guard officials, along with current and former captains.

"The 50th anniversary is kind of a dubious honor, right?" said Rear Adm. Nathan Moore, deputy commander of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area. "We've had a lot of fiftieths that have been happening here in the last couple of years. It's quite an incredible thing. These ships are still getting the mission done."

The cutter was built in three years in Ohio at a cost of just over \$3 million. After its 1968 commissioning, it became the ninth 210-foot Reliance class medium-endurance cutter. The class marked the first major addition to the Coast Guard's fleet since World War II.

It was designed to perform drug interdictions and search and rescue operations hundreds of miles offshore. The cutter also had the capability to provide support against Soviet submarines if war erupted.

"(The 210-foot cutters are) probably the most versatile cutter in the Coast Guard," said Capt. Charles Miller, deputy director of the Coast Guard Office of International Affairs and Foreign Policy in Washington, D.C., and former engineer officer on



Coast Guard photos

Cmdr. Alain Balmaceda, the commanding officer of the Coast Guard cutter Steadfast, signs the cutter's rudder 'El Tiburon Blanco' — 'The White Shark' — after a dry dock in Bellingham in November. The nickname was reportedly coined by drug smugglers.

the Steadfast. "She's the princess, if not the queen, of the fleet."

The ship has completed 340 search and rescue missions, interdicted over 1.6 million pounds of marijuana and 75,000 pounds of cocaine, seized more than 80 vessels and stopped more than 3,500 undocumented immigrants from entering the U.S., according to the Coast Guard.

Known as "El Tiburon Blanco," or "The White Shark," by Colombian drug smugglers, it is one of two cutters awarded a golden marijuana leaf, a symbol recognizing its seizure of more than 1 million pounds of the drug.

In 1981, the cutter joined the

Navy landing ship USS Plymouth Rock on a goodwill mission to the Caribbean and South America, the southernmost voyage for a Coast Guard cutter at the time.

Stories were offered Friday that ranged from humorous — a conflict between two sailors over baked potato fixings — to somber — a search and rescue operation after a plane crash in which crew members collected remnants to remember the tragedy.

"I know that if I had crashed into the ocean or lost a loved one at sea, I'd want Steadfast to be the one that came and got me," Miller said.

See Cutter, Page A7

Workers left in limbo by rehab company

Treatment center closes in Long Beach

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH, Wash. — The Klean drug and alcohol treatment center in Long Beach closed abruptly on Tuesday, displacing eight patients and leaving about 25 employees without jobs or paychecks.

A Klean outpatient treatment center and sober living facility in Astoria also appear to have shut down.

Andrew Spanswick, Klean's chairman and CEO, claims Klean is in the midst of a merger and could reopen soon. In late November, the company announced it would close a residential treatment center in West Hollywood, California. Telephone calls to Klean treatment centers in Portland, Bend and La Pine all went to voicemail.

"We are in the middle of a merger as the insurance companies and bankers have systematically dismantled our industry," Spanswick said in an email. "We are refocusing and will rebuild off of the existing assets upon completion of the merger, which will allow us to design a delivery system for behavioral health within the constrictions of the current political and economic market."

See Workers, Page A5

'WE'RE PROUD OF THEIR MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS, YOUR ONGOING ACCOMPLISHMENTS, NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS THE LOGISTICAL MIRACLE OF KEEPING THIS 50-YEAR-OLD VESSEL AN EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL PLATFORM ON THE HIGH SEAS.'

Bruce Jones | former commander of Coast Guard Sector Columbia River and Astoria's incoming mayor

The Steadfast approached the Astoria Bridge in November while displaying 'Never Sail Too Far' with signal flags.



New Daily Astorian website launches Tuesday

The Daily Astorian and its sister newspapers on the North Coast will launch new websites Tuesday.

This includes the Seaside Signal, Cannon Beach Gazette and Coast River Business Journal. The new Chinook Observer website launched two weeks ago.

What is changing? For starters, the websites will load much faster. Slow load times

See Website, Page A7



JIM VAN NOSTRAND

For Hammond couple, a second chance at love

Two proposals at the Astoria Column

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Tom Bearman really does not like heights.

But he has ascended the Astoria Column twice — the first time in 1963 and again in 2009 — just to ask the woman he loves to marry him.

Judy Bearman, then Judy Creviston, was only 20 the first time and living in Raymond, Washington, going



on dates with Tom, having a good time. They went to Astoria for a golf tournament and killed time in Clatsop County before the ferry left to take them back across the Columbia River. They went up to the Column and Tom proposed.

"Had you planned to do that?" Judy asks him now, the two of them sitting in the living room in their Hammond home.

Tom winks. "I wouldn't have asked you if I hadn't planned it."

But that first time, Tom added a "P.S." to the proposal: "You don't have to answer right away," he told Judy.

So she didn't. And then they didn't talk about it again for decades. Judy wasn't ready to get married. There was a whole life out there she wanted to live first.

Tom tried to scheme his way into Judy's heart, hoping to make her jealous by dating her roommate, Joy. It was, says Judy, "just a little



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Tom and Judy Bearman at their home in Warrenton.

See Couple, Page A7

