

Cutter: New cutters will be stationed at Tongue Point

Continued from Page A1

Built to last 30 years, the Steadfast underwent major repairs in 1992 and was stationed in Astoria in 1994. Work on hulls and mechanical issues was completed in 2010 in an effort to extend its usability another 15 years.

"Imagine a vessel which is both an antique and a fully capable operational asset out there protecting our nation and serving our community," said Astoria City Councilor Bruce Jones, a former commander of Coast Guard Sector Columbia River and the

incoming mayor.

"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," he said.

As cutters like the Steadfast continue to age, though, the Coast Guard has promoted efforts to replace much of its fleet.

"Here we are again on the brink of another transition with bigger, faster, more technologically advanced Coast Guard ships com-

ing online," said Cmdr. Alain Balmaceda, the cutter's commanding officer. "One thing is glaringly obvious about the Coast Guard medium-endurance cutters: they're old. They're really old."

The Steadfast, based at the city's 17th Street Dock, is set to be replaced by a new class of cutters in the 2020s, but a decommissioning date has not been set.

Two 154-foot Sentinel-class cutters are scheduled to arrive in Astoria in the first half of the next decade, and will be stationed at Tongue Point.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Trevor Lilburn

Pictures and an officer sword surround a cake marking the 50th anniversary of the Steadfast.

Couple: 'I will stay with him. No matter what'

Continued from Page A1

irritating." The roommate wasn't very interested in Tom at first but then one day she flopped on their couch and declared to Judy, "I think I'm falling in love."

And Judy thought, "Oh, crap. You can't be falling in love."

She reasoned with herself: She loved Tom, but she still wasn't ready to get married. She wasn't going to get in the way of this new romance.

So Tom married Joy. They moved around Washington state. They had some kids.

"And I stayed in Raymond and we all lived happily every after," Judy said.

Judy also married and raised children. She and Joy kept in touch, but Tom ignored Judy whenever they ran into each other. He still loved her, but he also loved his wife, completely. And Judy loved her husband. She had adventures. She traveled the world: Egypt, Israel, Italy, the British Isles, China. There was no pining, no "what might have beens." They had their own lives.

Now this is important, Judy says, shifting on the couch. She wants this to be clear: "There is such a thing as a perfect memory and a perfect love and you can love somebody for years and it can stay perfect and you never act on it. For

all those years, Tom was one of my happiest memories."

In 2006, Tom's wife died after a long illness. Judy reconnected with Tom at the funeral. They kept in touch over the next few years. It was a hard time for Judy. Her husband, a capable, community-minded man, was being swallowed up by Alzheimer's. Judy still has difficulty talking about it. She had to make hard decisions and figure out the best way to care for someone she loved as he became a stranger. Then she had to let go when he died.

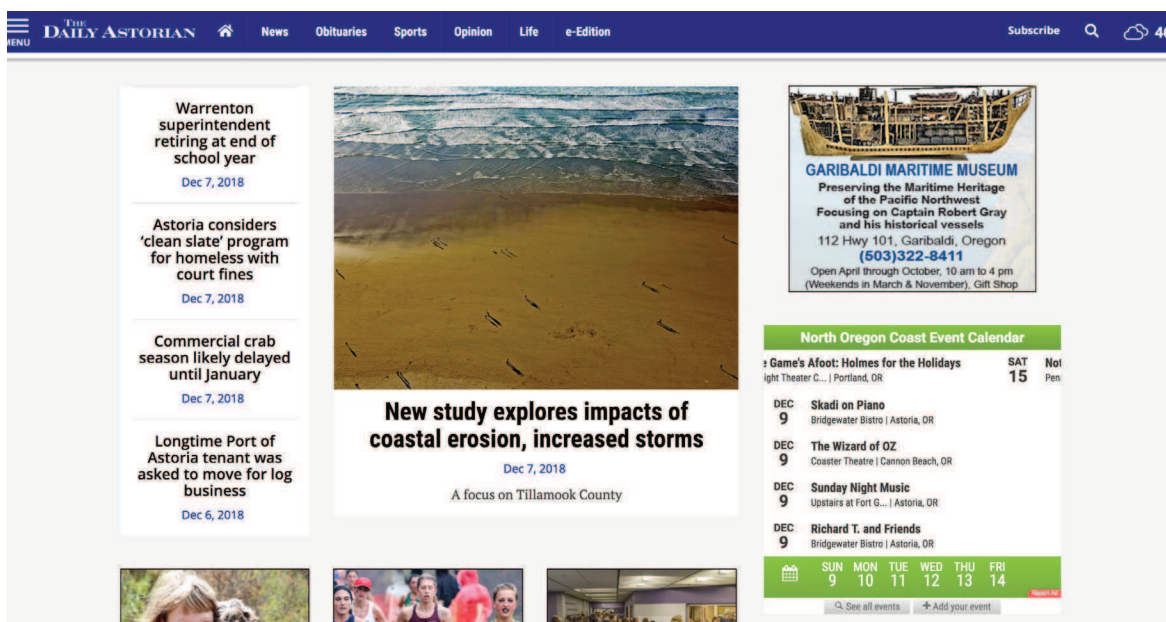
In 2009, Tom took Judy back to the Astoria Column. The weather was stormy, with wind gusts so strong you could hardly get the Column door open. Up at the top, Tom proposed again. But this time there was no "P.S.," no "take your time."

"Quick, answer," he said. "I've got to get out of here."

They married in 2010 and settled in Hammond. They don't regret the wait, or the time they didn't spend together — "Life is perfect," says Tom.

It is still perfect now even as a slow-growing tumor spreads a sort of gray haze over one side of Tom's brain. He is preparing to undergo a second surgery. Judy suffered a heart attack recently but she has made a fierce promise to herself.

"I will stay with him," she says.



A preview of the new under-construction homepage.

Website: We welcome your feedback

Continued from Page A1

have been a constant frustration for both our readers and our staff for a long time now. We think you will be very pleased with the difference.

The websites will also look very different. It's a fresher, cleaner viewing platform for news. All the content is customized for optimal display on smartphones and tablets, as well as desktop computers. And the visual presentation of photos and video is much more eye-popping.

On the back end, our reporters and editors will have more tools

at their disposal to deliver news more quickly and present it in new ways. Reporters, for example, will be able to post breaking stories, photos and video from their smartphones directly online when the occasion demands.

There are usually some glitches when media companies transfer their websites to new hosts, and this move is no different.

The most noticeable will be that most old links to stories won't work anymore. The stories will still be there, just with different addresses. We've imported archives going back over a

decade. There's a robust search engine to find them again.

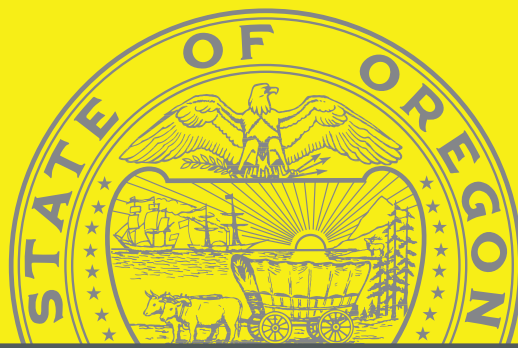
The other is a new commenting system. Old comments will no longer appear, and readers wishing to comment on stories will need to create new logins.

What won't change is our commitment to provide the most comprehensive local news about the North Coast available anywhere, both online and in print. This new system is simply a means to that end.

We welcome your feedback as you kick the tires. Send your thoughts to editor@dailyastorian.com.

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