



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Father William D. Oruko speaks to the congregation on Easter Sunday at St. Mary, Star of the Sea in Astoria.

An Easter celebration

The faithful marked the holy day

By COLIN MURPHEY
The Daily Astorian

Parishioners at St. Mary, Star of the Sea in Astoria observed Good Friday and Easter over the weekend. Father William D. Oruko delivered both services.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: People attend a Good Friday service at St. Mary, Star of the Sea in Astoria. Father William D. Oruko, far right, prepares to lead the Easter Sunday service. Father Oruko, far left, prepares to deliver the Easter Sunday service. Members of the congregation bow their heads during the Good Friday service.

Knappa fire chief to retire

Olheiser served for 28 years

By BRENNNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

Paul Olheiser is excited to finally have the chance to finish a woodworking project.

“As soon as I get involved in a woodworking project, a tone always goes off and I get distracted,” he laughed.

After 38 years as a firefighter and 28 years as the chief of the Knappa Fire District, Olheiser, 61, is set to retire in June.

After going through a number of surgeries in the past year, he decided the time was right.

“I want to spend more time with my grandkids while I have my health,” he said.

Originally from Prineville, Olheiser’s interest in firefighting was piqued while serving in the Marine Corps. He was assigned to protect natural resources as part of his range management duties at Camp Pendleton in California.

“I just enjoyed doing it,” he said.

After his military tour, Olheiser ended up moving to Madras, where he talked to a friend at the Jefferson County Fire District about joining as a volunteer.

His first day was actually a trial by fire.

A semitruck full of potatoes was in flames on a highway.

“I just remember getting the call: ‘Get dressed, get on the truck.’ No training, no nothing,” Olheiser said. “That was real common, getting training on the fly ... it isn’t like it is now. Now they’re required to have about 80 hours of training before they can even go on a call.”

While it felt overwhelming in the moment, what he remembers vividly is the satisfaction after the fire was out. He wanted to make firefighting his career.

Olheiser was hired part time with the Warm Springs Fire Department before eventually moving to work full time as a captain in the Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District. A few years later, his fire chief encouraged him to apply for the fire chief position that had opened up in Knappa.

“He just came in one day and he put a flyer in front of me. It was an advertisement for this position. And he said, ‘I think this is your cup of tea,’” he said.

Olheiser decided to make the leap, expecting to be in the position for only about five to seven years.

“They say to move positions every five years or so to keep yourself challenged,” he said. Yet every five years, “different things kept making the job challenging.”

Over the course of almost three decades, Olheiser led the fire district during a significant period of growth and change.

When he started in 1991, Knappa would get about 90 calls a year. Today, it’s closer to 500. Instead of responding to 10 car wrecks, his crew is responding to closer to 100. Wildfire conflagration calls, which used to be a rarity, are becoming more routine.

The fire district also expanded from one station to three during Olheiser’s tenure, while also taking over operations at the John Day Fire District.

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Pursuing nature in a time of climate change

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

EVERYDAY
people

It was a bad year for common murre.

In 2015, the small seabirds, widespread from California to Alaska, were starving. The ocean was a warm soup and the birds’ usual prey was scarce. Thousands of murre died.

The above-average ocean temperatures hurting the birds were perfect for massive algal blooms capable of producing the neurotoxin domoic acid. The blooms exerted another

kind of pressure on ocean ecosystems and delayed or even shut down commercial and recreational fisheries along much of the West Coast.

While temperatures are not as high now and the ocean appears to be more productive than it was in the warm years, nothing is truly back to normal. The ocean is still reeling. In the face of climate change, “normal”

is a bit of a moving target anyway.

All this to say: 2015 was a strange time to enter the world of natural resources.

But that’s when Cassidy Turner, best known locally as a bartender at the Voodoo Room in Astoria, began online coursework through Oregon State University, pursuing a degree in natural resource policy and management.

Beginning in May, Turner, now in her senior year, will leave Astoria and spend much of the



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Cassidy Turner is interested in a career in the natural resources sector.

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