

IN BRIEF

Local groups advocate for driver's license bill

An event aimed at immigrant communities will discuss how proposed legislation to give all Oregonians the opportunity to apply for a driver's license may impact them.

The Lower Columbia Hispanic Council and Indivisible North Coast Oregon will host the event from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on June 17 at the council's office, 1373 Duane St., Astoria.

Jorge Gutierrez, executive director for the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council, will discuss the bill. The group plans to send postcards to legislators advocating for "Driver's Licenses for All."

— *The Astorian*

Recology rates to see increase in Gearhart

Recology rate analyst Dave Larmouth outlined a proposal for a 2.7% rate hike in Gearhart effective July 1.

The rate is tied to the annual change in the consumer price index, he told city councilors Wednesday night.

With the construction of a permanent hazardous waste collection program, the city will see an increase from \$3.50 per ton on inbound trash to \$5 per ton at the transfer station, in order to help cover the costs of the building and operating the facility.

The monthly rate for 32-gallon curbside cart service would rise from \$20.52 to \$21.07.

Ninety-gallon cart pickup, currently \$34.25, would rise to \$35.17.

Sideyard pickup of a 90-gallon cart would increase from \$52.48 to \$53.90.

— *The Astorian*

Ban on coyote-killing contests passes state Senate

A ban on coyote-killing contests has passed the state Senate 17-12 over the objections of critics who say the bill runs roughshod over rural livestock producers.

Proponents of Senate Bill 723 claim that such "derbies" are an affront to responsible hunting and are often counterproductive in reducing predation of cattle and sheep.

"Population control, if desired, should be careful and selective, which killing contests are not," said state Sen. Mike Dembrow, D-Portland.

— *Capital Press*

DEATHS

June 6, 2019

HOLT, Helen M., 90, of Salem, formerly of Seaside, died in Salem. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

PHILLIPS, David L., 83, of Cannon Beach, died in Cannon Beach. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

CORRECTION

Wrong event times — The times for the Astoria Pride Parade and Block Party on Saturday were incorrect on Page 8 of Coast Weekend on Thursday. The parade starts at 11 a.m. and the Block Party starts at noon and goes until 6 p.m.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• Seaside Police arrested Lesli Houseman, 37, of Seaside, on Wednesday for driving under the influence of intoxicants. Police received a driving complaint about Houseman. An officer found her vehicle on Edgewood Street between avenues T and U. She recorded a blood alcohol content of 0.29%.

Assault

• The Clatsop County

Sheriff's Office arrested Sivai Bennett, 59, of Seaside, on Thursday on charges of violating a restraining order, second-degree assault, hit and run, reckless endangerment and reckless driving. Bennett allegedly followed her ex-husband east on U.S. Highway 30 before backing up and crashing into his vehicle near Wauna Mill, sending him to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9:30 a.m., special meeting, Astoria Transit Center, 900 Marine Drive.
Youngs River Lewis & Clark Water District Board, 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.
Cannon Beach Rural Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., Fire-Rescue Main Station, 188 Sunset Ave.
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria.
Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway.
Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.
Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 7 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Astoria High School graduates pose for photos in front of the Flavel House Museum before the annual grad walk.

Astoria High School graduates take traditional walk downtown



By COLIN MURPHEY
The Astorian

Astoria High School graduates took the annual walk through downtown Thursday morning before proceeding to the Liberty Theatre for a graduation rehearsal.

The walk started with a photo op for parents and other supporters at the Flavel House Museum before heading down Commercial Street to the cheers of pedestrians and honks from passing vehicles.

A member of the Astoria High School Class of 2019 takes the annual grad walk through downtown.

Lawmakers may end license suspensions over fines

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — State lawmakers are considering putting a stop to license suspensions for drivers who don't pay fines for certain traffic tickets.

Every year, thousands of Oregon drivers get tickets for noncriminal traffic offenses.

Advocates say suspending licenses for unpaid fines unfairly punishes poor people who can't afford the full weight of the fines and accrue more debt.

In 2017, the state Department of Motor Vehicles issued about 90,000 warnings to people who didn't pay their fines in a 35-day window. If the fines aren't paid or the driver doesn't

get on a payment plan, the license is automatically suspended 60 days later.

That same year, about 20,000 licenses were rescinded.

House Bill 2614 would prevent courts from suspending licenses of drivers who haven't paid their noncriminal traffic fines on time.

But with about three weeks left in the session, it has yet to receive a floor vote and hasn't budged from the committee it's been held in since March.

House Democratic Leader Jennifer Williamson, of Portland, a chief sponsor of the bill, said a license suspension is "an unnecessary barrier" for people in poverty.

"The idea that you would lose your license because you're too poor to pay your fees and your fines doesn't

do anything for the system," Williamson said. "It doesn't make us any safer, it doesn't increase the ability for people to pay if they can't afford their fees or fines."

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the impact that punitive fines have on people without means.

Lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Legislative Exchange Council, unlikely allies, recently teamed up on an op-ed in The New York Times to criticize the practice of suspending licenses for unpaid fines.

Advocates say that suspending licenses as a tool to collect a debt in many cases just leads to more debt.

A single noncriminal offense often costs more for someone who can't afford it

than someone who has the money to pay, say, \$200 on the spot.

Even the payment plans approved by a court can be burdensome for a person making minimum wage, according to testimony on the bill. For suspended licenses, the DMV charges drivers \$75 to get their license back.

"Being poor is really expensive," said Alicia Temple, legislative advocate for the Oregon Law Center, in testimony in February. "If you get a \$200 ticket and you can't pay it, suddenly you owe a lot more."

Meanwhile, hardship permits, which allow drivers whose licenses have been suspended to get to and from work, can be expensive and difficult to get, advocates say.

Coast Guard medevacs ailing crewman off cargo ship

The Astorian

WARRENTON — The Coast Guard medevaced an ailing crewman from a cargo ship off the Columbia River on Wednesday.

The Nordic Stavaner reported a 26-year-old Ukrainian crewman suffering from back spasms

related to a laceration two days earlier.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Astoria in Warrenton flew 72 miles southwest of the Columbia entrance, hoisted the injured crewman and took him to emergency responders at the Astoria Regional Airport.

Daylight saving bill passes

Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — A proposal to put Oregon on year-round daylight saving time passed the state House on Thursday, and now the only hurdles to the change are outside the state.

Senate Bill 320, which passed 37-20, now goes to Gov. Kate Brown. But the shift away from twice-yearly changing of the clocks will

only really happen if California passes similar legislation and Congress gets involved.

Washington state has already done so, and Gov. Jay Inslee has signed the change into law.

The California Assembly last month passed a bill to place the country's most populous state on daylight time, but the state Senate has yet to take it up.

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