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Summer school work delayed by asbestos

Improvements financed by \$70 million bond

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Astoria School District begins work this summer on a five-year, \$70 million building improvement project approved by voters last year. But asbestos in the walls of its historic campuses is already causing delays.

The work begins this summer with painting and the installation of a secured entrance at Lewis and Clark Elementary School by local contractor Helligso Construction Co. Contractors will also replace windows and doors on the west side of the Capt. Robert Gray School campus, home to the school district's offices, and resurface the track at Astoria High School.

But the discovery of asbestos in the stucco exterior plaster at Gray School has contractors rethinking the replacement of the building's other windows, Lee Fenton, part of BLRB Architects, told the Astoria School Board on Wednesday.

The cancer-causing insulation material was used widely in the walls, floors and ceilings of historic buildings such as the 95-year-old Gray School. The discovery will postpone major exterior work and window replacement until next summer, Fenton said.

Craig Hoppes, the superintendent in Astoria, cautioned that any asbestos is encapsulated behind walls and under flooring and not a safety hazard. "If it's not crumbled or exposed, it's fine," he said.

The school district hired PBS Engineering and Environmental to evaluate how to safely remove the asbestos.

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BLRB Architects

The centerpiece of the Astoria School District's \$70 million building improvement bond is the replacement of a classroom wing with a new three-story academic hall at Astoria Middle School.



The Astoria School District plans a redesigned frontage at Astoria High School, along with enclosing all external passageways to secure the campus entrances.



Among other improvements at John Jacob Astor Elementary School, contractors will replace an aging gym with a multipurpose cafeteria, kitchen and activity room.

At age 102, Nikkila has seen a century of history

A very special birthday
By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Norma Nikkila doesn't like to fuss. But she does have one wish for her 102nd birthday: Santa Claus.

"I feel pretty good," she said as she prepared to celebrate this week.

Nikkila, who has lived at Clatsop Care since 2015, spends most of her time in her reclining chair.



She still enjoys activities like the morning readings and bingo, her favorite.

Her long life is reflective of Astoria's history over the past century.

She was born June 21, 1917, in a small town in North Dakota. Her mother emigrated from Norway. Her father was a Finn from



Nicole Bales/The Astorian

Norma Nikkila celebrates her 102nd birthday this week.

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Bonamici renews call for Trump impeachment inquiry

Democratic representative: 'No one is above the law'

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici has renewed her call to open an impeachment inquiry on President Donald Trump.

"No one is above the law, including the president," the Oregon Democrat told a small crowd from Indivisible North Coast Oregon gathered outside the Barbey Maritime Center in Astoria on Friday afternoon.

Bonamici is a co-sponsor of House Resolution 257, which would direct the House Judiciary Committee to begin an impeachment inquiry.

"People have so many questions that they deserve to have answered," the congresswoman said. "We need to be answering those questions on behalf of the American people."

The investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election raised more questions than it answered, especially in regards to obstruction of justice, she said.

Mueller found that Russian intelligence officers launched a concerted attack on the U.S. political system, but concluded there was insufficient evidence the Trump campaign engaged in a conspiracy. Investigators also looked into potential obstruction of justice by the president, but did not make a determination.

"If we had had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so," Mueller said in May in his first public address about the investigation.

Bonamici has also accused Trump of committing human rights violations over the separation of immigrant children from their families at the border with Mexico, and of profiting from his presidency.

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Bonamici shares her experience

Congresswoman spoke to college graduates

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, a graduate of Lane Community College in Eugene, shared her experience and advice Friday with graduates of Clatsop Community College.

The college awarded more than 150 degrees and career certificates at Patriot Hall. The Oregon Democrat was the most high-profile politician to give the keynote speech at graduation since Gov. Kate Brown, who spoke in 2015.

Bonamici pushed graduates to take risks, keep their integrity and kindness, appreciate those who have helped them, stay informed and engaged, learn different viewpoints and make art part of their lives.

"Access to education levels the playing field," the congresswoman said. "That's important. Education can give students from every background the opportunity to succeed and to thrive."

Bonamici, originally from Michigan, said she jumped in a van with some friends, looking for adventure, and ended up in Eugene. She enrolled in a legal assistant program at Lane Community College and later attended law school at the University of Oregon.

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