

# the Astorian

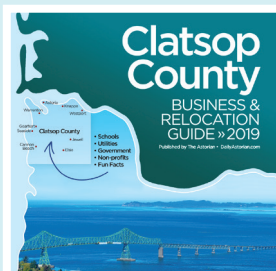
147TH YEAR, NO. 11

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\$1.50

## COAST WEEKEND

THE GEARHART HOTEL  
COMES ALIVE IN  
NEW MUSICAL



## INSIDE

A RICH RESOURCE FOR  
SERVICES, BUSINESS  
AND AMENITIES

## DRIVERS WANTED



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Peterbilt semitruck was sold to the college program for \$10,000 for students to practice driving large commercial vehicles. The 48-foot refrigerated trailer was donated by the Tillamook Creamery.

### Trucking school responds to industry demand

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

Cars lined up behind Austin Rieck as he idled just off U.S. Highway 101 Business on Monday, waiting for a clear stretch of road to pull out in his Peterbilt semitruck, pulling a refrigerated trailer.

His instructor, James Crowe, rode shotgun and preached patience in the slower-moving big rig.

“Once you accept you can’t just pull out and go fast, it makes everything easier,” Rieck said.

Rieck, a former meter reader for Pacific Power, is in the second class of

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Austin Rieck, left, drives a semitruck under the supervision of retired long-haul driver James Crowe. The four-week course is run by Clatsop and Tillamook Bay community colleges, providing students the opportunity to get a commercial driver’s license.

**‘RIGHT NOW, THERE’S PROBABLY A SHORTAGE OF 50,000 TRUCK DRIVERS IN AMERICA. THERE ARE TONS OF JOBS OUT THERE.’**

James Crowe | instructor and retired long-haul trucker with 34 years and 4 million miles under his belt

## County sheriff aims to retire

Bergin was elected in 2004

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin plans to retire at the end of the year.

The sheriff, who was first elected in 2004, had announced last year that he would not seek another four-year term.

Bergin said he would ask the county Board of Commissioners to appoint Lt. Matt Phillips, the jail commander, as interim sheriff. The election for a new sheriff will be held in 2020. “Well the time has come to provide the information as to my departure so the rumors and unknown can be resolved,” Bergin, 61, wrote in an email to his staff on Monday afternoon. “I will be leaving at the end of December this year.”

His decision came after a trying time of dealing with personal matters. Bergin was diagnosed with kidney cancer last year and said he became more reliant on his staff.

“It feels like I was living two lives, trying to take care of all my personal life and take care all of this place and it’s not fair to either side so it’s kind of like, ‘OK, it’s time,’” he said in an interview. The sheriff acknowledged he has received some criticism for his absences, but said he has always been involved.

“After going through cancer, double knee surgery, divorce and several other issues these last two years I know it has been hard on this office but I am proud how all of you have held this place together,” Bergin said in his email to staff.

Bergin explained in the interview that he has “taken some extra time for myself because you come to the realization, it’s like, there’s more to life than being a cop. Even though I swore and raised my right hand to this job, but it’s come to the point where it’s time to move on and people can say what they want, that’s OK.”

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Tom Bergin

## Coffee, waffles at food cart pod

Menu expands at 11th and Duane streets near City Hall

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Astorian*

Add waffles and coffee to the menu at the 11th Street food cart pod.

Joshua Jensen, a worker in the local coffee and marijuana industries, recently opened his new business, Coffee OR Waffle, in a small yellow cart in the pod developed by Michael Bruhn at 11th and Duane streets across from City Hall.

Jensen has split time between coffee shops and marijuana stores over the past several years. The thought of starting a cart or truck first came to him while working at Dutch Bros. in Astoria. In November, he bought a cart that came with an espresso machine.

He first thought of making a sand-

wich cart alternative to Subway, but switched his idea to waffles after visiting other regional shops.

“I thought about what I could offer other than coffee that was a little different,” he said.

He parked his cart in between Sasquatch Sandwich and Pizzuti’s Wood-fired Pizzeria, part of the growing offerings at the pod that now include tacos, soul food, ramen and sushi.

Jensen mixes his waffle batter from scratch and tops them with syrups, creams, fruit and other spreads. He will soon add vegan and gluten-free options, as well as savory waffles, starting with pepperoni pizza this weekend and a spinach feta with balsamic glaze soon after.

Jensen experiments with his waffle-maker at home and imagines grilling macaroni, grilled cheese, mash potatoes, brownies, cake mix and countless other ingredients.

“After that ... gosh, the menu’s endless,” he said.

Coffee OR Waffle opens from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Joshua Jensen recently opened Coffee OR Waffle in the food cart pod at 11th and Duane streets.

## Astoria planners reverse course on building heights

Restrictions on  
the riverfront

By KATIE  
FRANKOWICZ  
*The Astorian*

The Astoria Planning Commission has reversed course on how tall buildings can get along a section of the riverfront.

In June, the commission reached consensus — but did not vote — to cap building heights at 28 feet with exceptions to 35 feet for water-dependent projects in Bridge Vista, a section of the city’s Riverfront Vision Plan between Portway Street and Second Street.

On Tuesday night, commissioners voted 6-1 in favor of an amendment that would allow for taller buildings — up to 35 feet — across Bridge Vista, but with a floor area ratio proposal from staff that means the higher a building goes, the narrower it must be to maintain views.

The Planning Commission’s recommendations will likely go to the City Council for a public hearing in August.

The commission also approved plan district options for the Port of Astoria and Astoria Warehousing, potentially providing

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