

IN BRIEF

New school activity bus will debut in Seaside

SEASIDE — A new activity bus will join Seaside’s fleet of school buses this school year.

With extended leg room and overhead storage, “it’s like an airplane,” Michelle Wunderlich, a school board member who head’s the transportation committee, said with a laugh. “Except it doesn’t take off.”

On Tuesday evening, the school board unanimously approved the \$187,343 purchase of the bus.

The hope is the extra space will allow students to get more rest on their way home after sporting events, specifically on school nights. League games regularly require student-athletes to ride for more than an hour each way. During the playoffs, students can ride up to five hours.

Providence Seaside unveils plans for new emergency rooms

SEASIDE — Fred Loser remembers when things were so quiet at Providence Seaside Hospital that they would send doctors home for lack of business.

“When I came here in 1990 and ‘91, there were days when there was nobody here. With a full staff, they’d send people home to save expenses,” the Seaside resident said. “Now look at it — you can’t even get in the door.”

Today, emergency room manager Cherie Echelbarger said the emergency room sees about 10,000 patients a year.

“Transforming our emergency services is going to be really monumental here at Providence and the care we are able to provide the people who use our services here,” said Don Lemmon, the chief executive of Providence Seaside.

The \$5 million project is expected to be completed in June.

Washington hosts free day at parks

Washington State Parks is hosting a “free day” Sunday in honor of the National Park System’s 103rd birthday.

Day-use visitors will not need to purchase a Discover Pass to visit state parks.

A Discover Pass — \$30 annually, \$10 for a day pass — is usually required with any vehicle entering a state park in Washington. The pass is still required on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources lands.

Herman holds meet and greet

Astoria City Councilor Joan Herman is holding a “Meet the Councilor” event from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Wednesday in the Flag Room of the Astoria Library, 450 10th St.

All are welcome to come, or drop in, and ask any questions or share concerns about city-related projects. For questions, email Herman at jherman@astoria.or.us

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

Aug. 20, 2019	Aug. 16, 2019
HUTT, Mary, 94, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Hughes- Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.	GEISLER, Donna Lee, 68, of Knappa, died in Portland. Caldwell’s Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIAL

Friday, Aug. 23

MATTHEWS, Michael “Skip” — Memorial at 4:30 p.m., on the dock, at the end of Sixth Street, on the Columbia River.

ON THE RECORD

DUII	was 0.17%.
• Eric Dawane Smith, 30, of Astoria, was arrested Tuesday morning on 45th Street and Lief Erikson Drive for driving under the influence of intoxicants. His blood alcohol content was 0.14%.	Disorderly conduct
• Brian Douglas Campbell, 36, of Gladstone, was arrested Sunday on the 400 block of W. Marine Drive for driving under the influence of intoxicants. His blood alcohol content	• Kelsey Dawn Nguyen, 22, was arrested Monday on the 800 block of W. Marine Drive for disorderly conduct in the second degree.
	• Trace Morris, 47, was cited and released Sunday at Providence Seaside Hospital for disorderly conduct.
	Strangulation
	• Travis Lee Rowland, 34, of Seaside, was arrested Monday in Seaside for strangulation.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Sunset Empire Transportation District Board, 9 a.m., Astoria Transit Center Conference Room, 900 Marine Drive.

theAstorian

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Dancers took over the Painted Lady Lavender Farm in Ilwaco on Saturday for the eighth annual belly dance festival.

Hood to Coast goes green

Move toward sustainability

By KATHERINE LACAZE
Seaside Signal

Organizers of the Hood to Coast Relay are making strides during this year’s race to adopt more sustainable event management practices and mitigate waste.

The roughly 200-mile relay draws about 19,000 participants, along with thousands of volunteers and spectators, who travel from Timberline Lodge on Friday to Seaside on Saturday.

“We have a responsibility, but also the ability to reach a lot of people within the race community, so we can help drive social change,” Hood to Coast spokesman Dan Floyd said. “There’s so much we can do at our own event.”

Although the organizers have internally attempted small measures for improved waste management over the past decade or so, they are undertaking a more concerted effort this year through a partnership with Elysium Events, a sustainable event management company out of Portland.

Elysium founder and owner Lindsey Newkirk said in this initial year, they are using “a little bit of a softer approach to just try to get people information,” and bring awareness to the massive amount of waste cre-



Hood to Coast Race Series
Runners at the starting line of the Hood to Coast Relay.

ated at large events, such as the “Mother of All Relays.”

The main challenges with Hood to Coast are the number of people out on the course and the numerous exchange points that manifest almost as individual “minievents along the way,” Newkirk said.

One step this year is implementing a strategy to ensure recycling is done correctly through building awareness and disseminating useful information. Organizers are providing a sorting guide with tips on reducing waste at exchange points where vendors are serving food and beverages. Participants can access the guide using the recently introduced race app — which also provides safety and course information to keep people updated about weather or last-minute changes.

Many people may not be aware, for instance, that if too many contaminants

get into a recycling stream — rendering it too difficult to sort — the entire load will be sent to a landfill, Newkirk said. Elysium has a strategy for helping in this area by providing back-of-house sorting to remove contaminated items. Groups of students from Glencoe High School and Roosevelt High School have volunteered to help with sorting in exchange for bottles and cans that can be deposited for money at the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative.

As Newkirk pointed out, however, “It’s all the more environmentally preferred to prevent waste from occurring in the first place.” Participants are encouraged to use a refillable water jug or bottle instead of single-use, disposable plastic bottles, and buy snacks in bulk or put together homemade snacks in reusable containers, as opposed to individually wrapped items.

Teams also can sign an online pledge to commit to preventing creating waste. If every van were to convert to reusable water jugs and bottles, they could collectively avoid an estimated 157,000 single-use disposable plastic bottles throughout the course of the race.

The implementation of these strategies will allow organizers to establish metrics for determining the event’s average resource recovery rate and gauging waste reduction efforts in the future, as well as identifying new sustainable solutions and waste prevention incentives that could be used.

“This year, we’ll at least be able to create a baseline,” Newkirk said. “We can use that baseline for creating goals for increasing that recovery rate over time.”

This will be the 30th year Hood to Coast has used Seaside to host the party at the beach for participants. Like the varied terrain and starting point at Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood, Floyd said, the party on the beach is one of the iconic aspects of the event that people have come to expect.

“They definitely like coming and experiencing a lot of the same things,” he said. “We are selling people on the venue as much as the actual race.”

Teams filter into town from early morning until night during the second day of the race, and the public is welcome to join the party.

Astoria shoots down vacation rental project

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

The Astoria City Council tentatively denied a project that would have converted a 5-unit apartment building on Commercial Street into Airbnb-style rentals.

The unanimous decision upheld a Planning Commission vote in June to deny the application from Stewardship Homes LLC. The Tigard company appealed the Planning Commission’s denial, saying the commission’s concerns over lack of parking and the loss of long-term rentals did not apply.

But city councilors added to the list at the appeals hearing Monday, saying they did not believe the use was

a good fit for the neighborhood. They questioned how the project would benefit the city.

City Councilor Roger Rocka noted the two-story building’s proximity to a community park and the First Baptist Church. Though located in a commercial zone, the feeling of the neighborhood is decidedly residential, he said.

Councilor Jessamyn West pointed to the council’s goals established earlier this year, one of which is to support efforts to increase Astoria’s long-term housing supply.

The councilors did command Matt Gillis, of Stewardship Homes, for his care of other buildings he owns in the city.

Gillis and Garrett Stephenson, the lawyer representing Stewardship Homes, said they understood the concerns about housing.

“But,” argued Stephenson, “I think, at a very central level, that’s a citywide problem and that’s not for this application to solve.”

Nor is there any requirement for Gillis to offer housing at affordable or workforce rates, he noted.

A ban on converting residential units into short-term rentals was not under consideration when Stewardship Homes submitted its application, Stephenson said. He also argued against using the perceived lack of on-street parking as grounds for denial.

But concerns about hous-

ing remained a sticking point for city councilors and people opposed to the project.

Sara Lu Heath, executive director of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, wrote that the association has heard “from our membership that there is not adequate workforce housing in Astoria, and this is hindering attempts to hire, expand, and in some cases just keep normal business (hours). Losing this asset is not in the best interest of our year-round community.”

City staff will rewrite their findings to reflect the City Council’s arguments. The City Council plans to finalize its denial of the appeal at a special meeting on Tuesday.

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