

BON VOYAGE

Miniboats set sail for Japan as part of cultural exchange

By HAILEY HOFFMAN
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Students from Warrenton Grade School, Columbia City Elementary School and Wy’east Middle School passed off miniboats they built to the Columbia River Bar Pilots and the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Steadfast for release at the Miniboat Summit at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria on Tuesday morning. The GPS-equipped miniboats will be tracked by the museum, which puts on the program, as they journey to Japan over the coming months as part of a cultural exchange with the country. In late November, three schools in Japan launched their own fleet of miniboats destined for the U.S.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
The Warrenton Grade School designed a Goonies-themed miniboat which featured a 3D-printed bust of ‘Sloth’ and a Goonies-style map on the hull of the boat.



Warrenton Grade School students stand on the 17th Street Dock to watch their miniboat as it is handed off to the Columbia River Bar Pilots.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



Julia Triezenberg, left, and Nate Sandel from the Columbia River Maritime Museum help Chris Frezier attach lights to a miniboat in Heidi Lent’s class at Warrenton Grade School on Jan 15. Triezenberg and Sandel visited the class regularly to help them build their boats destined for Japan. Pacific Power also supported the program and donated solar panels to the students to help light their ships.



Students from Columbia City Elementary tour the bridge of the Coast Guard cutter Steadfast on Tuesday morning. The fifth graders decided they wanted to launch their miniboat near San Diego, so they passed the ship off to the crew of the Steadfast, which will pass by California.



Warrenton Grade School’s miniboat is lowered into the river off the Columbia River Bar Pilots boat before it caught the wind and jetted off. The pilots recaptured the boat after its test ride in the water.



LEFT: Nate Sandel, the education director for the Columbia River Maritime Museum, addresses students, their families and the community during the Miniboat Summit. Sandel is the creator of the program and traveled to Japan over Thanksgiving to deliver and launch miniboats with the help of local Japanese schools. RIGHT: The Goonies-themed miniboat is loaded onto the Columbia River Bar Pilots boat.

