

IN BRIEF

Columbia Memorial Hospital settles negligence case

Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria reached a settlement in a \$4.6 million lawsuit alleging medical negligence.

The lawsuit alleged that Betsy Christensen, a Naselle, Washington, woman, went to the hospital in April 2017 with symptoms consistent with a potential stroke, but the hospital failed to perform an MRI before she suffered a stroke that left her severely disabled.

James Thomas, Christensen's son, who filed the lawsuit on her behalf in March 2019, claimed that a doctor concluded a stroke could only be identified by an MRI, but that the diagnostic procedure would not be available for two more days.

The hospital and Dr. Michael Mitchell were named in the lawsuit. Claims against Mitchell were dismissed.

James Huegeli, a Portland attorney representing Christensen, said the settlement agreement was confidential.

Columbia Memorial Hospital declined to comment.

Federal fire grants help local departments

The Astoria Fire Department recently received nearly \$160,000 for new breathing packs. Cannon Beach Fire District got \$47,600 for new hoses. And more federal grant money could be on the way.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's grants program helps fire departments nationwide with equipment, staffing and training.

Dan Crutchfield, the Astoria fire chief, said the bottles in the fire department's self-contained breathing backpacks are 15 years old and need to be replaced.

"I guess, historically, the department over the last few years has not been seeking grant funds, but I believe in them," he said. "And this will help the city drastically. That's \$160,000 that we don't have to take out of an account that can go towards apparatus and other things."

Marc Reckmann, the chief of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District, said his grant money will replace nozzles and hoses that date back to the 1970s.

— *The Astorian*

Ocean Beach schools to start remotely due to virus

LONG BEACH, Wash. — The Ocean Beach School District's Board of Directors voted unanimously on Monday to begin the 2020-21 school year in a remote-only model because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision came after recommendations from the Pacific County Public Health and Human Services Department and state officials, as well as Superintendent Amy Huntley, who formally presented her recommendation to the board at the special meeting.

"There's no plan that's going to meet everyone's opinions and needs," conceded Huntley. "We've got to do the best that we can, because really the board has to do their best — and so do I — to deal with the responsibility of educating our children, but also dealing with their health and safety."

— *Chinook Observer*

CORRECTION

First name incorrect — Sam Garber is the owner of Dock 420 B&B. He was incorrectly identified as Ben in an A1 story Thursday.

ON THE RECORD

Strangulation

• Matthew Tyler Kuentler, 30, of Grants Pass, was indicted Wednesday for strangulation, coercion, assault in the fourth degree and menacing.

Weapons charges

• Dion Earl Weeks, 19, of Beaverton, was indicted Thursday for unlawful use of a weapon, unlawful possession of a firearm, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct in the second degree.

Disorderly conduct

• Bradley Joel Crupper, 58, was arrested

Thursday on 20th and Exchange streets in Astoria for disorderly conduct in the second degree.

Reckless endangerment

• Brandy Lorenzo Birge, 38, of Clackamas, was arrested Thursday near state Highway 53 and U.S. Highway 26 for reckless endangering of highway workers.

DUII

• Anthony Guy Bellingham, 34, of Birkenfeld, was arrested Thursday on state Highway 202 for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Jewell School Board, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

TUESDAY

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Gearhart Herzig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

Seaside couple bring passion for biking to new bike store

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For The Astorian

SEASIDE — Andy Thornton is a familiar face when it comes to bike mechanics in Seaside, so much so that he is known around town as "Bike Shop Andy."

After spending more than two decades in the industry, he's taken his trade to the next level by opening A's Bike Shop on the corner of S. Roosevelt Drive and Avenue B.

"I've turned wrenches here for a long time," Thornton said. "It's getting people to know that I'm back."

His past experience includes more than 25 years working at the Prom Bike Shop before stepping away from the industry for a few years and pursuing other jobs.

"Now that I'm a little bit older and my kids are gone, I needed to do what I wanted to do," he said.

While Thornton primarily runs the shop, his wife, Michelle, also pitches in behind the scenes with ordering parts, bookkeeping and managing customers.

A's Bike Shop, which opened in January, is a full-service bike shop that sells bicycles, parts and accessories in addition to handling repairs. Thornton's specialty service areas include high-end and electric bicycles.

Both Thornton and his wife are longtime residents of Seaside. They feel their knowledge of the local area has made it easier to establish the business.



Katherine Lacaze/For The Astorian

Andy and Michelle Thornton opened a new bike shop in Seaside.

"If you do good work in a small town, it comes back to you," Thornton said.

The clientele he's cultivated so far is a blend of recreational riders and daily commuters. Recreation is multifaceted as well, since some people prefer riding on the Promenade and side-walks in town while others take to logging roads and mountain trails and the Oregon Coast Bike Route on U.S. Highway 101.

At the end of the day, Thornton said, "I don't care what you're riding, I just want you to get out and have a good time."

His No. 1 priority is customer service and doing what he can to ensure customers leave satisfied. He's happy to offer advice to novice riders, but he also doesn't let a sales perspective dictate his interaction with clients.

"The biggest part of customer service is listening to the needs of the people," he said.

After suffering an injury, he's not able to mountain bike on the trails like he used to. Now, he's channeling his passion "through my tools and keeping everyone else going."

He's also a big supporter of the North Coast Trail Alliance, an organization dedicated to improving and sustaining mountain biking opportunities on the North Coast for residents and visitors alike.

Michelle Thornton doesn't come from the industry — in fact, she's still working full time at the Mo's restaurant in Seaside. However, she is a longtime bicycle rider, and she says, "I'm learning more about it as we're going along."

While A's Bike Shop was able to remain open as an essential business throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Thornton is facing other challenges. The company experienced growth up until last month when they

leveled off, he said, as it's become difficult to find the specialty products he needs for repairs, as well as new bikes.

"I can't get inventory because the bike world is ravished," he said. "The whole country is unable to get what they need."

Since the issue trickles back to manufacturing and the delay in getting products from overseas, there isn't much business owners can do individually except wait for more product. Thornton is doing what he can in the meantime with common repair parts or putting off certain projects until he can get the items he needs.

A's Bike Shop has also seen an increase in demand for labor to repair older models that people are pulling from storage and bringing in to make due for now.

"We've stayed steady with repairs," Michelle Thornton said, adding, the rest of it "is a waiting game."

Facebook abandons broken drilling equipment

Project at Tierra Del Mar

By KALE WILLIAMS
The Oregonian

Lynnae Rutledge was worried when she heard Facebook planned to build a landing spot for an undersea fiber-optic cable near her Oregon Coast home.

Tierra Del Mar, where the 70-year-old retired government worker lives part time, is a tiny community north of Pacific City with no stoplights and no cellphone service. The enclave, all zoned residential, consists of about a dozen mostly gravel streets running perpendicular to an idyllic stretch of beach, each lined with single-family homes.

Rutledge and many of her neighbors worried about heavy equipment on fragile roads built over sand dunes. They worried about noise and vibrations from the drill needed to punch a hole under the seafloor thousands of feet out into the ocean. They worried about threatened bird species, like the snowy plover and marbled murrelet, that could be affected.

Despite their concerns, and a vocal campaign to stop the project, construction began earlier this year.

Then, on April 28, the drilling crew hit an unexpected area of hard rock. The drill bit became lodged and the drill pipe snapped



An aerial photo shows the lot where Facebook was drilling earlier this year to connect a high-speed fiber-optic cable to the Asian continent.

50 feet below the seafloor. The crew was able to recover some of the equipment, but they left the rest where it lay.

Today, about 1,100 feet of pipe, a drill tip, various other tools and 6,500 gallons of drilling fluid sit under the seafloor just off the coast. Facebook has no plans to retrieve the equipment.

Edge Cable Holdings, a Facebook subsidiary responsible for the project, notified Tillamook County of the accident on May 5, but it did not explicitly mention the abandoned equipment. That information didn't emerge until a meeting with state officials June 17, nearly two months after the malfunction, said Ali Hansen, a Department of State Lands spokeswoman.

"The delay in notification eliminated any potential options for recovery of the equipment," Hansen said in an email. The U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers said the company's new plan is to return in early 2021 to drill a new hole, leaving the lost equipment under the seafloor indefinitely.

A Facebook spokeswoman confirmed the drilling equipment remains below the seafloor just off the coast but disputed the timeline of when the state was notified. She said the company was aware the May 5 letter had been passed to state officials by a resident and followed up with a phone call with the Department of State Lands two days later.

She also said the company had performed an environmental assessment and "determined that there is no negative environmental or public health impact from the drill head remaining at the site."

"While marine retrieval of the remaining equipment and drilling mud may

be possible," she said in an email, "such an effort is not guaranteed to succeed and it is not an environmentally prudent option."

On Thursday, the Department of State Lands notified the company that it was in default of its permits because it was using the area to "store" the abandoned equipment, which was unauthorized. The agency told Facebook it had 30 days to reach an agreement with the state on damages to be paid for violating the permit and amend the agreement to address any "current and future risks and liabilities that may arise from the abandoned" equipment.

The default also gave Facebook 180 days to "remove the abandoned pipe, equipment, tools and drilling mud in consultation with the (state) and without causing damage to the environment" or apply for a new permit to leave the equipment where it is.

The accident and its aftermath, first reported by the Tillamook Headlight Herald, is beyond any initial fear Rutledge had.

"I actually believed that they would make life miserable during the time they were here, but finish by April and then be gone," she told The Oregonian. "I could never have imagined that their pipe would break and they would abandon it with no plan to remove it from under the sea bed."

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VOLUNTEER PICK OF THE WEEK



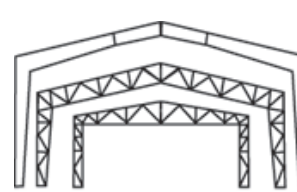
Andre

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