

CORONAVIRUS

Ship clocks offer a window to Astoria's first cruisers



The twin clocks from the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific — facing back to back — will be on display at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Curator calls them the 'Rolls Royce of clocks'

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

On March 16, 1915, around 10,000 people gathered to welcome the Great Northern, a palatial high-speed cruiser. The ship had been built, along with its sister ship, the Northern Pacific, to whisk passengers between the former town of Flavel near present-day Warrenton and San Francisco in little more than a day.

The ships were nicknamed the Twin Palaces of the Pacific. But their shuttles between the Columbia River and San Francisco would only last 2 1/2 years before they were pressed into service as troop transports during World War I.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum is planning an exhibit on the ships after receiving twin clocks Astorians had gifted the Great Northern Pacific Steamship Co. in 1915 to honor the new chapter in the region's development.

Canadian-American industrialist James J. Hill, the CEO of the Great Northern Railway, became known as "The Empire Builder" after establishing a network of rail lines crisscrossing the Upper Midwest, Great Plains and Pacific Northwest.

Michael Haglund, the president of the Astoria museum's board of trustees, became intrigued by the vessels and researched Hill and his machinations in the Pacific Northwest for the museum's

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ABOVE: Matthew Palmgren looks over artifacts from the Twin Palaces of the Pacific, which will be included in the exhibit at the Columbia River Maritime Museum. BELOW: A photo in an original passenger log book shows an ornate room inside of a ship.



Couple dies after plunge into river

Car went through railing at Pier 39

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A Hillsboro couple died on Sunday after their vehicle drove off of Pier 39 into the Columbia River.

Yuzhi Fei, 76, and Wenyi Chen, 72, were near Rogue Pier 39 Public House before noon when their vehicle went through the railing and into the river, Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding said.

The police chief said bystanders and emergency crews tried to help rescue the couple.

Dan Walters, of Portland, said he was eating at Rogue with his girlfriend when he saw the crash.

He said he immediately ran over, took off his shoes and jumped into the river with another man.

"We both reached in to try to grab them," he said. "I multiple times had my finger on her seat belt, but I couldn't pop it open."

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Veterans service officer hired by nonprofit

Bobian served in the Coast Guard

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Clatsop County has a new veterans service officer who will help veterans obtain benefits.

Stephen Bobian, a U.S. Coast Guard veteran and the former veterans service officer for Jackson County, started on Aug. 3.

The county shifted the contract for the position in May from Luke Thomas, a Coast Guard veteran, to Clatsop Community Action, a social service agency.



Stephen Bobian

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UPS driver praised for service

Customer thankful for the 'David experience'

By NANCY MCCARTHY
For The Astorian

UPS driver David Brady unlocks mysteries all the time.

On a route that requires him to deliver more than 200 packages daily from Seaside to Falcon Cove, Brady constantly must



match unknown addresses and correct doorsteps in the least amount of time as possible.

The friendly driver, who is well-known throughout South County, recently received an award of excellence from the CEO of UPS. The company's northwest district president called him an "amazing ambassador."

Brady, however, said he didn't feel he had done anything special.

"I was pleasantly surprised," he said. "I was just working to help my people."

It was around dinnertime two months ago — Brady works 12 hours a day — when he was heading down U.S. Highway 101 toward Arch Cape and turning onto Buena Vista Drive. He spotted some keys in gravel near the highway.

"I thought, 'Somebody is going to be wanting these,'" he recalled. "It wasn't just one key. It was a lot of keys."



Nancy McCarthy

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UPS driver David Brady.



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