

IN BRIEF

Warrenton teenager killed in crash on Nicolai Mainline

A Warrenton teenager was killed Saturday in a crash on the Nicolai Mainline, a logging road in eastern Astoria.

Officials said Leif DeWinter, 18, was riding a Yamaha dirt bike and crossed over the center of the road into the path of a side-by-side vehicle operated by a Vancouver, Washington, man.

Emergency crews were called at about 11:20 a.m. and lifesaving efforts were made, but DeWinter died at the scene.

The Clatsop County Sheriff's Office said in a statement it "would like to remind those who enjoy riding OHV's (off-highway vehicles) to always do so in a safe manner and to remain within the designated OHV (off-highway vehicle) riding trails and areas as established by the Oregon State Parks department."

Coast Guard suspends search for plane near Cape Falcon

The U.S. Coast Guard on Sunday morning suspended the search for a man who piloted a single-engine plane that reportedly crashed in the ocean late Saturday afternoon west of Cape Falcon.

Officials said the man took off from an airport near Tillamook before the crash.

Coast Guard boat and helicopter crews were searching for the man and debris overnight and again at daybreak and did not find the man or any debris.

Elk feeding in Jewell canceled over virus

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has suspended elk-feeding tours at the Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area this season because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tours typically run from December through February, allowing visitors to feed Roosevelt elk from wagons.

"Given current COVID-19 restrictions and the inability to practice social distancing on the wagons used on the tour, ODFW determined it cannot conduct a quality elk-feeding tour while maintaining the safety of participants, staff and volunteer hosts this season," the state said in a statement.

Staff will continue to provide supplemental feed to elk in areas around Jewell Meadows for viewing opportunities. Feeding will be closer to viewing areas on weekends.

Owen appointed to Seaside school board

SEASIDE — Brian Owen, the chief executive officer of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, was named to the Seaside School District Board of Directors Zone 6 Position 2 last week.

Owen replaces Hugh Stelson, who announced his retirement at the board's October meeting.

"Brian is very involved in our community ... and it would be wonderful to have him join our board," Superintendent Susan Penrod said.

— *The Astorian*

ON THE RECORD

Theft

• Jessica Harley, 30, of Jefferson, was arrested Saturday at Fred Meyer in Warrenton for theft in the second degree. Harley was arrested Sunday at Walmart in Warrenton for theft in the second degree and criminal mischief in the third degree.

DUII

Michael D. Brown, 35, of Hixson, Tennessee,

was arrested Sunday on 34th Street and Lief Erikson Drive in Astoria for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

• Jason Wesley Ficken, 40, of Astoria, was arrested Saturday for DUII, eluding a police officer, reckless driving, driving while suspended or revoked and refusing a breath test.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, noon, work session, (electronic meeting).

Clatsop Care Health District Board, 5 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

WEDNESDAY

Wickiup Water District Board, 6:30 p.m., 92648 Svensen Market Road, Svensen.

THURSDAY

Seaside Civic and Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., Seaside Civic and Convention Center, 415 First Ave.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

Warrenton Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave., virtual access at ci.warrenton.or.us.

Warrenton-Hammond School Board, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

the Astorian

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SKIPPERS AND CREW GET SET FOR BUSY FISHING SEASONS



Boats lined up at the Ilwaco boatyard.

Photos by Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

By **LUKE WHITTAKER**
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — Busy offseason boat preparations for upcoming recreational and commercial fisheries are well underway at the Port of Ilwaco Boatyard.

The boatyard has been even more abuzz than normal since the arrival of a much-anticipated new 75-ton marine Travelift last week. The new lift completed a roughly 2,100-mile journey from Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, where the mobile boat hoists have been built since 1954.

The lift replaces an antiquated 1977 50-ton marine Travelift, according to Port Manager Guy Glenn Jr.

"Boats are getting bigger and wider and we want to modernize our facility to meet their needs," Glenn said.

The colossal new machinery has already eased haul-outs, as more boats begin to arrive, eager to complete annual maintenance ahead of fishing seasons, starting with Dungeness crab — typically in December.

The new marine lift was assembled over two days outside the boatyard before making its first official haul out with the F/V Branko Storm on Thursday.

The lift left an immediate impression.

"It's a huge deal. It's just so much smoother and a lot faster," said Paolo Jurkovich, the owner of F/V Branko Storm.

As Jurkovich watched his boat hoisted out, he reflected on the history of the 42-foot vessel.

"Branko is my dad's name. We built Branko boats ourselves for years. We built 50 boats for Area M, a False Pass (Alaska) fishery in the Aleutian chain," Jurkovich said.

The vessel, homeported in Chinook, is used to crab locally in the winter, then spends summers gillnetting out in the Aleutians in Alaska.

"We bring the boat back and forth from Alaska," Jurkovich said. "We're just getting geared up for crab season now."

He said he plans to do mostly routine maintenance, including adding new zincs and fresh bottom paint.

Jukovich, who is licensed to run 600 pots between Oregon and Washington state, said the last crab season was "decent," but he's feeling uncertain about the upcoming season.

"I'm a little insecure with COVID going on. How much we're actually going to get paid for the crab is kind of a question mark. There's quite a bit of uncertainty," he said.

Rob Gudgell let out a sigh of relief as he finished painting the F/V Marr-B III.

"This is the last boat I've gotta do," said the charter skipper, standing in paint-stained overalls next to the



Tim Teall pressure-washes the F/V Beachcomer.



Rob Gudgell of Pacific Salmon Charters has been busy working on their fleet of five boats for the upcoming charter fishing season.

'BOATS ARE GETTING BIGGER AND WIDER AND WE WANT TO MODERNIZE OUR FACILITY TO MEET THEIR NEEDS.'

Guy Glenn Jr. | manager of Port of Ilwaco

1976 43-foot vessel, one of five in the Pacific Salmon Charters fleet.

"I've already done all the bottom paint and inspections on all the others. Now I can go hunting," he joked.

Gudgell rewired the mast, added new lights and new carpet in the interior, as well as general maintenance that included fresh bottom paint, zincs and a U.S. Coast Guard inspection.

"I have all the Coast Guard inspections done in the fall instead of the spring in case they find something major wrong I have all winter to fix it," he said.

Gudgell had help with the work from his brother, David.

"We got the F/V Westwind done and put it in the shed," Gudgell said, adding that they completed a few recent buoy jobs after the fishing season.

Finding the motivation after a busy charter fishing season is sometimes the hardest task, he said.

"You've been working seven days a week for several months and just want to relax and spend some time with family while the weather is still good," Gudgell said.

The charter fishing season typically kicks off in March, but faced a delay this past season for several months through much of the summer after COVID-related restrictions.

"We lost two and a half months because the state closed down the ocean to

and do your own thing."

Blake was happy to have the time and space to install a new, more powerful sonar to help find squid, a necessity for that peculiar nighttime fishery.

"You go out, turn some lights on and squid come out. Then the big boats come around and circle you up and catch them," Blake explained. "This will be my first time ever. I just have friends in it. They fish on the big boats but there's small boats, too. I'll be one of the little boats that has all the lights."

Don Davenport made the roughly four-hour excursion from Westport to Ilwaco use the boatyard, where he plans to be for approximately a month, a bit longer than his usual stay.

"Usually, I come in February for eight or 10 days, but this time I'm going to stay longer and try to get more done," Davenport said of his 1974 56-foot F/V Ranger.

"The top we do every year and the bottom every two years. I'm debating if I want to strip the entire bottom or not and start over," Davenport said, adding that the boatyard provides the ideal amenities.

"Westport doesn't have a yard where you can work on stuff yourself. Hoquiam has a few little spots," he said.

Cost of pandemic

Davenport estimated that more than 30% of the recreational charter season was lost due to COVID restrictions first implemented in March, a time when the charter bottom-fishing season is just beginning.

"We lost a couple months, then there were restrictions on the number of people we could carry. It was probably about two-thirds of a normal year, as far as what I did," he said, adding that the vessel is capable of carrying up to 28 fishermen and crew on off-shore fishing excursions for tuna, salmon and bottom fish.

He said he enjoys the tuna trips the most, sometimes staying offshore to fish for up to two days at a time.

"Tuna are the most fun to catch," Davenport said, adding that this past season was "medium" overall. "There were some tough days and some good days. Salmon wasn't all that great. Hopefully, it's better next year."

"I hope we get our halibut in May instead of having to do it August. I lost out on halibut because I was tuna fishing during the season."

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