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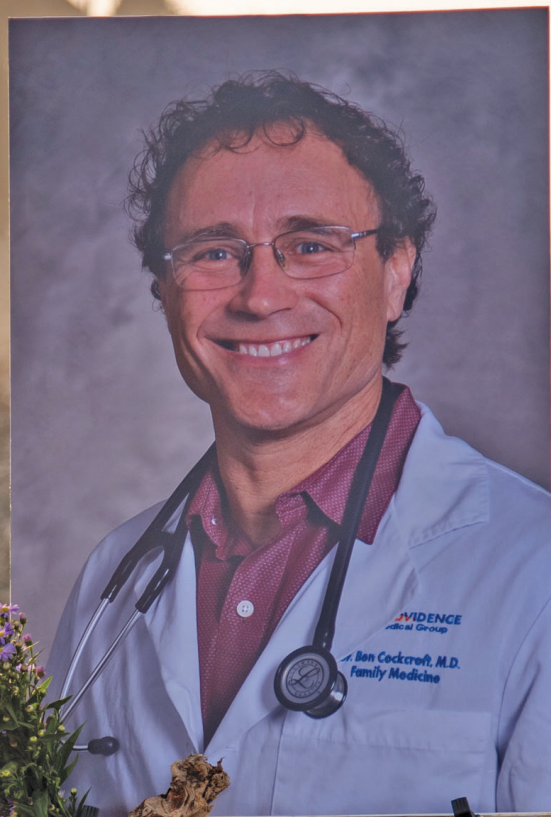
INSIDE

CORONAVIRUS

A TRIBUTE

Dozens of friends, loved ones and patients drove by the Cove in Seaside on Wednesday evening to pay their respects to Dr. Ben Cockcroft. The longtime Providence Seaside Hospital doctor was an avid surfer who died while snowboarding in February.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian



State grant to improve Riverwalk

A Portland Loo for downtown

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Astoria is getting a Portland Loo-style outdoor bathroom at Peoples Park, among a host of lighting, signage and safety improvements to the Astoria Riverwalk between downtown and Uniontown.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Local Government Grant program awarded the city \$428,408. The city will add \$288,937 from urban renewal and tourism promotion funds.

The city's community development and parks departments prepared for the grant with the help of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association and the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce. The project ranked fourth out of 27 applications statewide.

Jonah Dart-McLean, the city's parks director, pitched the project earlier this month on behalf of the partners.

"I think there's a lot of components that made us successful," he said. "One, the Riverwalk is a great existing resource, so it's offering an improvement to something that's already been invested in so heavily. The city put in millions of dollars over the years since the Riverwalk was built. And then there was a lot of different facets of the project, too, that made it attractive."

The project will improve lighting along the Riverwalk between Portway and 17th streets and add buffer strips along the trolley tracks to improve access

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State updates vaccine rollout • A2

Home business divides neighbors

City Council to hear appeal over noise in Uppertown

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Neighbors are fighting the conditional approval of a man's home auto-detailing business in Uppertown over noise concerns.

City staff had initially denied an application by Will Gutierrez, who details cars in the garage of a house he rents off of 34th Street, to run a home business, Vanguard Auto Detailing, over noise and traffic concerns. After agreeing to limit his hours of operation and take no more than three vehicles a week, Gutierrez received the support of city staff and approval from the Astoria Planning Commission in January.

Gutierrez argued that he can't afford to lease commercial space for the business and pay child care costs for his newborn.

"My wife works outside of my home," he said. "And when my son was born in July 2020, I realized that by running the

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Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Astoria firefighter Mike Groat, left, holds 'Orville,' the puppy belonging to John Wesley Willis, right, that he saved from a house fire in July.

'My dog's in there'

Artist honors firefighters for rescue

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Local artist John Wesley Willis said he has never felt the kind of gratitude as when Astoria firefighter Mike Groat emerged from his burning house holding his puppy, "Orville."

Willis thanked the Astoria Fire Department at a ceremony Wednesday with "Safe," an oil painting on wood panel of a firefighter holding Orville outside the home they saved.

In July, Willis was repairing an eave of his historic bungalow on 15th Street when the epoxy he was using ignited a roof fire. Willis grabbed a hose and tried to battle the blaze. Lucky for him, an Astoria fire crew was headed back to the

station from a fire alarm at Astoria Middle School, noticed the rising smoke in the sky and went to work.

While the fire crew battled the fire, Willis realized Orville, his French bulldog and pug mix, had gone inside to look for him. He'd gotten Orville several months earlier, after his previous dog died of cancer. Willis said he tried to go into the house but was stopped by the fire crew.

"All I know is that I said, 'My dog's in there,'" Willis told Groat on Wednesday. "Less than a minute later, you come out with my dog, safe, and I just have never been so grateful for anybody helping me."

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A memorial is planned for Todd Chase, a Warrenton fisherman who died when the Coastal Reign capsized.

Memorial planned for Warrenton fisherman

Family grateful for community support

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

In the week since Todd Chase died, the Warrenton fisherman's family has seen a flood of community support.

Chase, 51, was one of four crew members aboard the Coastal Reign, a Warrenton-based commercial fishing boat that capsized Saturday while crossing the Tillamook Bay bar.

Chase and another Warrenton fisherman, Zach Zappone, 41, died.

More than 200 people, including North Coast businesses in the fishing and timber industries, have contributed to a

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