

# Mattila: 'I'm going to miss him an awful lot'

Continued from Page A1

In recent years, Mattila spent time coaching youth football, including players at the third grade level, the grandchildren of players he had taught in the 1970s.

His death wasn't sudden or unexpected, said Mattila-Gascoigne. "He just didn't want anyone to know. He was in the hospital for 21 days, and it was not until day 18 or 19 that he actually started letting me let people know what was happening."

Mattila-Gascoigne, a nurse practitioner at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, said "the congestive heart failure stems from the fact that he had the juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. In some cases it gets severe enough it messes with your heart, and in his case it did. Eventually, the heart gets weak enough that it can't pump, then the kidneys get involved (cardiorenal syndrome), and basically the heart fails and the kidney fails."

Mattila had only recently returned home to be with family.

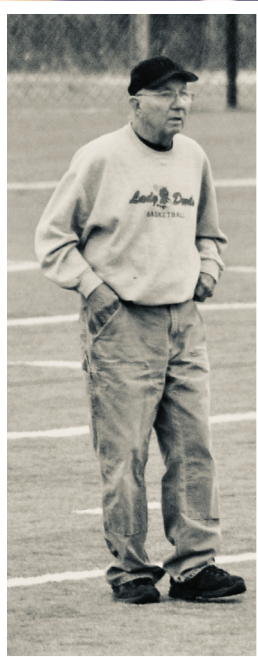
"He knew that we knew. He came home to say goodbye," Mattila-Gascoigne said. "He was so happy being home and having his friends here. All he wanted to do was get back home."

And, in typical coach Mattila fashion, he wanted all the details ironed out in preparation for his passing.

"You know my dad — he was trying to plan every little thing," Mattila-Gascoigne said. "He wrote his own obituary, and then attached his passport photo to it, so we knew what photo he wanted."

"He was very adamant that he didn't want a funeral and didn't want this or that. But he never said the words 'celebration of life.' We're still convinced that we'll do something, but it's a little early right now," she said.

His son-in-law, Paul Gascoigne, said, "he was talking and visiting with people up



Photos by Gary Henley/The Astorian  
**ABOVE: John Mattila won 290 games as the Warrenton girls basketball coach. LEFT: John Mattila coached Warrenton third grade football players right up to the 2019 season.**

ing position at Tillamook High School in 1970, and coached football, wrestling and baseball.

He moved to Warrenton in 1974, was named head football coach, and taught English, physical education, health, driver's education and was vice principal.

The Mattila era of Warrenton football spanned five different decades and 15 league championships.

The school board voted in 2016 to name the high school gridiron John Mattila Field.

"John was the best organizer of any coach I've ever been around," said McBride, who assisted Mattila in football. "He loved high school sports. I can't tell you how many times we scouted on Saturdays after playing Friday. He was so organized, and always had something ready for the next game."

Right up to his final days, Wolfe said, "John was controlling his own narrative, as far as how things were going to end."

In addition, "I feel that I've lost a very good friend. High school football since

1991, for me, has meant spending time with John. From the time I joined his staff until the last home game this year. We missed maybe six or seven Fridays in the last 10 years, where we just couldn't find a game to go to."

### 'Very loyal'

McBride said winning was important to Mattila, but it wasn't always the only thing.

"He was very loyal to anyone who worked their butt off, even if they weren't the best player. He was going to treat them respectfully, give them a chance and an opportunity," he said. "He was a little old-school in that. It wasn't always about playing the absolute best. He was real loyal to kids who worked hard."

Wolfe said, "at the forefront of my thoughts right now, are Mary Ann and Allison. I'm feeling sorrow and sympathy for them."

"Allison said on Facebook that she had lost her hero. I suspect a lot of people feel that way. I'm going to miss him an awful lot."

## Six new virus cases reported by county

The Astorian

Clatsop County on Monday reported six new coronavirus cases.

The cases involve a woman in her 20s, a man and a woman in their 50s and two women and a man in their 60s living in the northern part of the county.

All six were recovering at home.

The county has recorded 918 cases since the start of the pandemic. According to the county, 22 were hospitalized and eight have died.

The county will resume the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week after the federal Food and Drug Administration and Oregon Health Authority lifted a pause.

The county will continue to reserve the one-dose vaccine for people who have difficulty getting to regularly scheduled vaccination clinics.

## Park: 'Really great progress'

Continued from Page A1

The donation brought the \$1.4 million fundraising effort close to the amount needed to start construction at Peoples Park off Marine Drive in the fall. The park will include a large midsummer pole in the middle of a plaza surrounded by trees and shrubbery. Granite slabs and flagpoles will represent Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, with an archway leading to interpretive panels explaining the heritage of Scandinavians in the region.

Janet Bowler, the vice chairwoman for the Nordic Heritage Park Committee, said the donation was a nice push forward given the challenges of trying to raise money without in-person gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's a way to meet people and new donors, and we've been without that for two years," Bowler said. "But despite that, we've made really great progress. The Nordic community really wants to see this park built."

Bowler said the park still has several border plaques

and laser-cut inscription panels available for naming rights.

Larson said there are some scaled back, online and socially distanced events planned for the midsummer festival from June 18 to June 20, including a livestreamed coronation of the court and an optog, or parade, from the Columbia River Maritime Museum to the site of the Nordic park.

"We'll be in native wear," Larson said. "We'll have our flags out. I think we're going to have a smaller version of our midsummer pole. Our standard is quite unwieldy. But we'll be singing the national anthems, both of old and of our American home."

Bowler said the Finnish Suomi Hall in Uniontown will sell rice pudding and fruit soup to-go behind the building. The attic of the hall will also host a livestreamed reader's theater production of "Of Love and Politics," she said, after 13 scripts were found in the attic and translated.

"Theater was really big at Finnish Brotherhood from the turn of the century to the '50s," she said.

Annual  
**MAY**  
ANNIVERSARY

**SALE**  
April 30-May 1  
10AM TO 5PM

**SAVE**  
**20%** ON ALMOST THE ENTIRE STORE  
*(limited to stock on hand, excludes food, consignment and special priced item)*

**Additional 20% OFF Clearance**

**Fineware**  
(503)325-5720 • 1-800-851-FINN  
1116 Commercial • Astoria OR

finnware.com

**DEL'S O.K. TIRE**  
**point S**  
TIRE and AUTO SERVICE

Del Thompson, former owner of OK Rubber Welders.

Klyde Thompson, current owner  
Mike Barnett, manager

**YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR TIRES**

**CUSTOM WHEELS  
AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES**

*Over 72 years of the Thompson family putting you first!*

**(503) 325-2861**  
**35359 Business 101, Astoria**  
MON - FRI 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
SAT 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
pointstire.com/astoria