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In Manzanita, sightings of a bear called 'Hope'

A black bear has been spotted in Manzanita.

Laura Merrill

Several reports of a black bear in town

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

MANZANITA — In the video, the black bear pauses and stands like a saint on a Catholic holy card: one paw dipped into a bird bath, the other raised up into a bird feeder, as if invoking heaven and earth.

It was the second time Thomas Campbell had seen a bear in his backyard in the last week. He wasn't the only person to get a visit from the bear — dubbed by some "The Manzanita Bear" and nicknamed "Hope" by one woman. Residents have reported several sightings in the last two weeks.

One person photographed a bear perched on a tree branch on Second Street in the middle of the afternoon last week. A little while later, a bear lumbered into Laura

'IT WAS PRETTY EXCITING. I'VE NEVER BEEN THAT CLOSE TO A BEAR OR ANY OTHER BIG WILD ANIMAL.'

Laura Merrill | Homeowner who had a bear wander onto her back patio

Merrill's yard and settled down on her back patio a few feet away from a window.

"It was pretty exciting," Merrill said. "I've never been that close to a bear or any other big wild animal."

The thought passed through her mind that the bear might be able to break through the glass

and into the vacation house if it wanted to. But it didn't seem interested in Merrill and her husband as they watched from behind the window.

The bear came on trash day after the cans had already been emptied and Merrill and her husband removed their backyard bird feeders before returning to their home in Portland to make the yard less interesting to the bear. Merrill still worries though. Not for herself, but for the bear. She hopes it doesn't get into trouble.

One bear has likely been the source of the various bear sightings in Manzanita this month, state wildlife officials say. It is probably a younger bear hunting up a few more calories before retreating to a den where it will spend much of the winter months. Oregon's black bears do not enter

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VACCINE MANDATE

Warrenton firefighters vaccinated by deadline

City had feared many would quit

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Despite fears that Warrenton would lose many firefighters over Gov. Kate Brown's coronavirus vaccine mandate, in the end the fire department may see a net gain.

In a letter to the governor in September, Mayor Henry Balensifer warned that he would be forced to declare an emergency and request outside resources, such as the Oregon National Guard, if firefighters quit over the state mandate.

Fire Chief Brian Alsbury had said that the number of firefighters could shrink from 23 — three paid staff and 20 volunteers — down to single digits if unvaccinated staff left the fire department and others quit in solidarity.

"We've been trying to provide as much information and support and room for people to make whatever decisions they need to make," Balensifer said.

Many vaccine-hesitant firefighters ultimately consulted with their doctors and "a bunch got vaccinated," he said.

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Aging tide gates threaten farmland

Challenges over cost, government regulation

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Many of the tide gates that protect Oregon's coastal farmland from being inundated with saltwater have become relics of a bygone era.

As these old tide gates deteriorate, the farmers who rely on them worry that their time may be running out as well.

"As soon as a tide gate goes out, you can't graze, you can't raise hay. You've lost your land, basically. It's not productive anymore," said Craig Herman, who raises cattle and hay between Coquille and Bandon.

See Tide gates, Page A2

Cape D leader focuses on teamwork

McCommons is new commander

By PATRICK WEBB
Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — Jason McCommons is back on familiar territory.

The chief warrant officer with the U.S. Coast Guard took command of Station Cape Disappointment this summer.

But for the 65 personnel around him, he's not exactly the "new guy." McCommons has spent 17



Patrick Webb/Chinook Observer
Chief Warrant Officer Jason McCommons was welcomed as the commander of U.S. Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment earlier this year. It is his third posting to the Ilwaco base.

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Schools look to support students

Social-emotional learning gains traction in Astoria

By ETHAN MYERS
The Astorian

As schools try to recover from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, the Astoria School District is turning to a different approach — social-emotional learning.

The process, as described by Astoria's new social-emotional learning coach Jenni Newton, is "the learning that happens in addition to the content of

the classroom." Superintendent Craig Hoppes said that after a tumultuous year and a half for students, the school district had to reevaluate.

"We needed to think a little differently," he said. "We're concerned about kids' academics, but we're also concerned about supporting them in other ways so they can access their academics."

Hoppes expects the addition of social-emotional learning to have positive impacts on teachers, as well.

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