



Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Astoria High School senior Chris Sanchez scrapes lichen off a gravestone at Greenwood Cemetery.

Astoria students tackle cemetery restoration

The gravestones at Greenwood can bring history back to life

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

On a rainy afternoon in Greenwood Cemetery, Astoria High School senior Bailey Templeton tends to a gravestone.

The monument is dark brown and black, its edges worn. Whatever shape it once was, and whatever name is engraved, are difficult to make out, as time and weather have taken a toll.

A closer look reveals an intricate design of a dove, constructed with white marble.

With the help of Templeton and two classmates — Chris Sanchez and Aidyn Noah — this gravestone and many others will soon resemble their old forms.

The students have teamed up to make the restoration of Greenwood Cemetery their senior projects. The trio typically spends two afternoons a week, for around an hour each time, following the guidance of cemetery owner Mike Leamy.

They scrape, scrub and clean the moss, lichen and dirt that have built up over time. They also edge the perimeter of the gravestones to maintain their shape and spray a biological solution to improve the coat — the stuff that makes white marble look white again.

“They keep everlastingly at it, and that’s the way it is with a perpetual care cemetery,” Leamy said. “You keep going, start at one point and keep working through, knowing that the maintenance requirement will be following you up the hill.”



Astoria High School senior Bailey Templeton sprays a gravestone with a stain remover.



Mike Leamy is the owner of Greenwood Cemetery.

Gratifying work

Senior projects typically involve 20 hours of community service. Templeton and Sanchez got a jump over the summer and have exceeded their required hours. Noah, who just began

at Astoria High School, is nearing 20 hours, as well. The task of maintaining the cemetery became such gratifying work for the trio, that Templeton said they almost think of it like an extracurricular activity.

Templeton, who Leamy refers to as the “field commander” because of her leadership and initiative, was the mastermind behind the idea. For her, the project is both personal and a passion.

“For me, I have been around death a lot, and I want people to be able to remember the ones they’ve lost,” said Templeton, who has several family members buried in the cemetery.

Her appreciation for art and working with her hands has kept Templeton returning, and since she lives next to the cemetery, she can be found scraping, scrubbing and spraying more than just twice a week.

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GEARHART

State zeroes in on highway improvements

A final facility plan is expected next year

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

GEARHART — A three-lane roadway, access to public transit, sidewalks, safer crossings and a possible roundabout at Gearhart Lane are among the options being considered by the Oregon Department of Transportation to improve U.S. Highway 101.

The multiyear process will culminate with delivery of a final facility plan at the end of 2022.

“All of our solutions were built off that 2017 transportation system plan that was adopted by the city, really focusing on this three-lane cross section that provides traffic calming and then access to the residences and businesses in the corridor by creating a continuous center turn lane throughout the corridor,” Kenneth Shonkwiler, a regional traffic planner with the Department of Transportation, said at an update for the City Council last week.

Cost for lane reconfiguration, a 12-foot multiuse path on the east side of the highway and a 6-foot sidewalk on the west, along with bicycle lanes, curb and landscape buffer, is estimated at \$14 million. An alternative using a barrier to separate north and southbound traffic is estimated at \$6.9 million.

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SEASIDE

Hotelier buys historic building

Khan is planning a second-floor hotel

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Hotelier Masudur Khan has purchased the Gilbert Block Building downtown and plans to renovate its second floor into a hotel.

The two-story building, on a little more than three-quarters of an acre, sold to Seaside LLC in October for \$3.1 million. The sale includes the 38,000-square-foot building, including riverfront property, and a parking lot on the east side of N. Holladay Drive.

The ground floor will continue to be rented as stores.

Khan helms Seaside Lodging and owns and manages hotels and restaurants in the Pacific Northwest, including the Inn at Seaside, the River Inn, the Coast River Inn and the 65-room SaltLine Hotel. His wife operates the Gilbert Inn and the Inn at Haystack Rock. Khan is the past chairman for the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association.

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Marathon runner overcomes hurdles

Spear won the Portland Marathon

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — When people see Matt Spear running, they sometimes yell, “Run, Forrest, run!”

While Spear didn’t run across the country like Forrest Gump,



the character in the classic Tom Hanks film, the Seaside resident ran and won this year’s Portland Marathon.

Spear first entered the event in 2015. His most disappointing moment came in 2019 when he was part of the group of runners that went off course after following a biker who

wasn’t part of the race about 10 miles in.

“There wasn’t someone saying, ‘Go this way,’” he said.

By the time they stopped, turned around and got back on course, they had added several miles to the run. “We did the scenic route,” he said.

While his chances for a win that year were gone, he still finished in the race’s top 10 and eyed future marathons. “I felt a little disappointed, but it happens,” he said. “You just kind of get ready for the next one.”

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R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Matt Spear, a Seaside resident, is setting his sights on the 100K Black Canyon Ultras.

