

UNDER THE LIGHTS



People roller skate at the Astoria Armory on Saturday night. The venue reopened over the weekend after temporarily closing during the pandemic.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

INSIDE



HOLLY JOLLY:
THE NORTH COAST
CATALOG FOR
LOCAL GIFTS

COAST WEEKEND:
TREE LIGHTINGS IN
ASTORIA, SEASIDE



CANNON BEACH

Voters pass food tax

Work begins on implementing tax

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A controversial food tax has passed by only four votes.

Clatsop County certified the Nov. 2 election on Monday. The measure's slim lead held at 379 votes to 375. The margin, tight as it is, is not enough to trigger an automatic recount. However, people have until Dec. 7 to submit a request for a recount with the state.

The 5% tax applies to prepared food sold at restaurants and similar businesses. Revenue generated by the tax — an estimated \$1.7 million annually — will be split between the city and the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District. The city plans to use its portion of the money to help fund a new City Hall and police station. For the fire district, the money will go toward operational costs.

Consumers won't start to see the tax on their bills until next summer. But for city staff and elected officials, who had been waiting for the election to be certified, work on how to actually implement the tax must begin soon.

"There's a lot of work to do between now and then," Mayor Sam Steidel said.

The reasons for the tax have been debated in Cannon Beach since the measure was first proposed. Now that the tax is moving forward, Steidel said officials need to make sure the rollout is clear and understandable to the community.

"This is something new so we want to get it right," Steidel said. "We want to do it properly and openly."

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Community mourns father, son after crash

Donors step forward to help family

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Ryan Hull, the interim director of Cannon Beach Academy, can clearly picture Kobe Braxton in his mind.

"He had an amazing smile that could melt you," he said of the first grader. "He was an extraordinarily confident young man."

Kobe was the type of kid who would try to hold doors open for others. He loved sports — especially basketball — and anything that let him stay active.

"He also had an inquisitive spirit, too, and he was pretty fun that way, but he knew how to read the situation," Hull said. "He was a pretty clever young man."

In many ways, Kobe mirrored his father, Michael Braxton, who "always had that big smile and a song in his heart," said Paul Nofield, owner of the Driftwood Restaurant and Lounge in Cannon Beach.

Braxton, a manager at the Driftwood, died Nov. 9 after a three-car collision near Shelton, Washington. Kobe died Nov. 11 from injuries sustained in the crash.

Amber Hulbert,



Students created a memorial for their classmate.

'IT'S BEEN A ROLLER COASTER. ALL THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE LIFE SO BUSY AND HECTIC JUST SEEMED TO STOP. YOU JUST ARE SHOCKED AND NUMB AND CAN'T REALIZE WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED AND WHAT HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY.'

Ryan Hull | interim director of Cannon Beach Academy

Michael's fiancée and Kobe's mother, and their daughter Kaia, a kindergarten at the academy, also were in the vehicle and sustained injuries. "The father passed immediately, and his son, my first grade student, Kobe Braxton, sustained injuries so that they had to put him into a medically

induced coma," Hull said.

The event left a scar on both the academy and the community at large.

'A breath of fresh air'

Nofield met Michael Braxton in 2015 in Buckeye, Arizona, where he also has a home. Braxton was working at the Verrado Golf Club.

They formed a friendship in the following years, spending time with one another's families and playing golf together. In 2018, they started discussing the idea of Braxton coming to work for the company in Oregon, and the Braxton family visited that summer.

"Michael is definitely a professional hospitality person," Nofield said. "He could read people and understand their ways just by looking."

In fall 2020, Braxton and his family made the move to the Oregon Coast, and he assumed the manager role at the Driftwood.

"Michael fit right in," Nofield said. "He took right away to the staff, and the staff took to him. ... He was one of the greatest managers I ever met in the restaurant industry. He had the heart of hospitality. He also had a heart for people."

For Patrick Nofield, president of Escape Lodging Co., which owns the Driftwood, Braxton was "a breath of fresh air." When Braxton was hired, he sent Patrick a message thanking him for the job.

"That's the kind of guy he was," Patrick Nofield said. "He always portrayed that he was positive and outgoing and fun."

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Pam Fleming plants a ginkgo tree at Cartwright Park in Seaside.

R.J. Marx/The Astorian

A peace tree comes to Cartwright Park

Ginkgo tree marks close of World War II

By R.J. MARX
The Astorian

SEASIDE — After two years of nurturing, a ginkgo tree has found a new home in Cartwright Park.

Seaside arborist Pam Fleming led members of the City Tree Board and the Parks Advisory Committee to the southern edge of the park for the tree planting.

The tree, which marks the 75th anniversary of the close of World War II, was delivered in 2020 as Seaside joined other communities throughout the state in planting the peace tree.

The seedling ginkgo and Asian persimmon trees were grown from

THE TREE, WHICH MARKS THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLOSE OF WORLD WAR II, WAS DELIVERED IN 2020 AS SEASIDE JOINED OTHER COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE IN PLANTING THE PEACE TREE.

seed collected from trees that survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 and were brought to Oregon by Hideko Tamura-Snyder.

The Medford resident is the founder of the One Sunny Day Initiative, which along with the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Community Trees helped distribute the trees across the state.

Tamura-Snyder received seeds of camphors, camellias, Asian persimmons and ginkgo trees from the

international nonprofit Green Legacy Hiroshima, collected from trees that had survived the atomic bomb.

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